



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

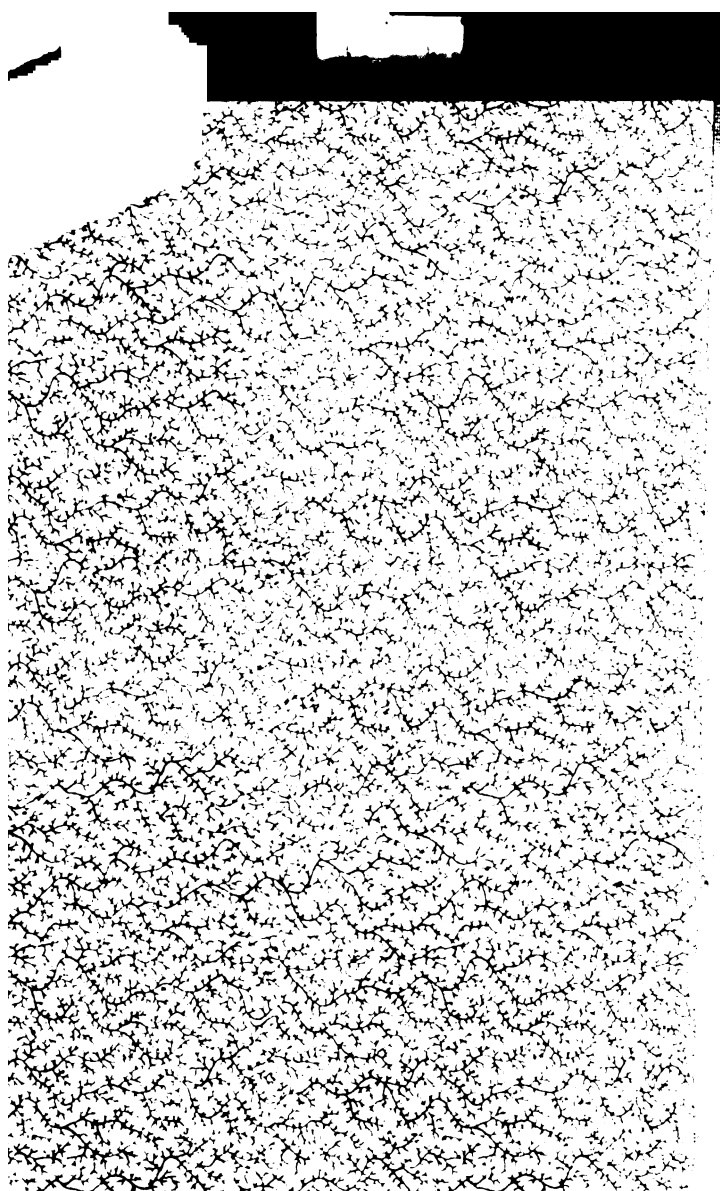
### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES

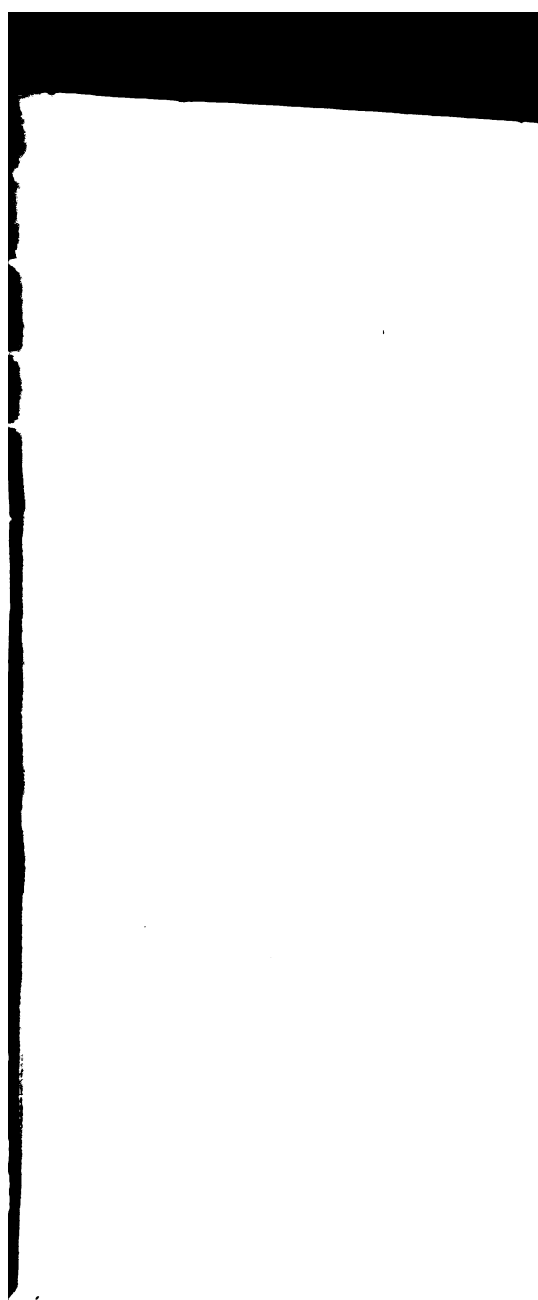


3 3433 07491268 8













(B...)  
NCZ -



1. The first part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

2. The second part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

3. The third part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

4. The fourth part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

5. The fifth part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

6. The sixth part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

7. The seventh part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

8. The eighth part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

9. The ninth part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

10. The tenth part of the document is a letter from the [redacted] to the [redacted] dated [redacted]. The letter discusses the [redacted] and the [redacted] of the [redacted].

~~628-814.B5~~

L. Ross. Ed.  
Boston 1865

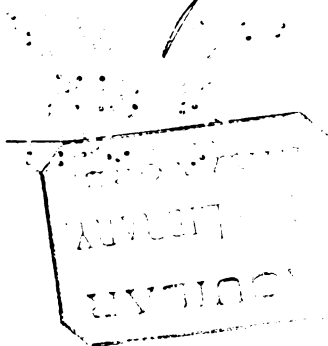
824 B699  
THE  
Vol. 11.

# AUTUMN HOLIDAYS

OF A

COUNTRY PARSON.

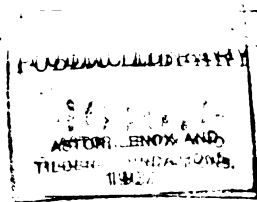
*Andrew Kennedy by Hutchison Boyd*



PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1878.

*4*



NOV 23 1927





# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

	Page
BY THE SEASIDE . . . . .	1

## CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING UNPRUNED TREES . . . . .	19
-------------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING UGLY DUCKS : BEING SOME THOUGHTS ON MIS- PLACED MEN . . . . .	36
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SUDDEN SWEETENING OF CERTAIN GRAPES . . . . .	56
--	----

## CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE ESTIMATE OF HUMAN BEINGS . . . . .	76
---	----

## CHAPTER VI.

REMEMBRANCE . . . . .	98
-----------------------	----

## CHAPTER VII.

ON THE FOREST HILL : WITH SOME THOUGHTS TOUCHING DREAM-LIFE . . . . .	109
--	-----

## CHAPTER VIII.

A REMINISCENCE OF THE OLD TIME : BEING SOME THOUGHTS ON GOING AWAY . . . . .	127
---	-----

1304  
JEF 3

## CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING OLD ENEMIES . . . . .	155
----------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER X.

AT THE CASTLE: WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON MICHAEL SCOTT'S FAMILIAR SPIRIT . . . . .	175
---	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

CONCERNING THE RIGHT TACK: WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON THE WRONG TACK . . . . .	195
--	-----

## CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNING NEEDLESS FEARS. . . . .	220
------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIII.

BEATEN . . . . .	238
------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIV.

GOSSIP . . . . .	244
------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XV.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY ON BACON . . . . .	252
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVI.

SOME FURTHER TALK ABOUT SCOTCH AFFAIRS . . . . .	291
--	-----

## CHAPTER XVII.

FROM SATURDAY TO MONDAY . . . . .	327
-----------------------------------	-----

CONCLUSION . . . . .	349
----------------------	-----



THE NEW YORK

## CHAPTER I.

### BY THE SEASIDE.



WE have been here a little more than a week, all of us together. For if you be a man of more than five-and-thirty years, and if you have a wife and children, you have doubtless found out that the true way to enjoy your autumn holidays, and to be the better for them, is not to go away by yourself to distant regions where you may climb snowy Alps and traverse glaciers, in the selfish enjoyment of new scenes and faces. These things must be left to younger men, who have not yet formed their home-ties, and who know neither the happiness nor the anxieties of human beings, who spread a large surface on any part of which fortune may hit hard and deep. Let us find a quiet place where parents and children may enjoy the time of rest in company; where you will be free from the apprehensions of evil which (unless you be a very selfish person) you will not escape when the little things are a thousand miles away. And, to this end, one may well do without the sight of lakes, waterfalls, streets, and churches, which it was pleasant once on a time to see. Upon this day, last year, I ascended

▲

the marvellous spire of Strasburg Cathedral. It was the brightest of all bright days. You went up and up, by little stairs winding through a lace-work of stone, which it makes one somewhat nervous to think of even now, till you emerged on a platform whence you looked down dizzily on the market-place hundreds of feet below; upon the town, all whose buildings looked so clean and well-defined in the smokeless air; upon the fertile level plain, stretching away towards Baden; and the ugly poplars, marking the course of the Rhine. It was all, to an untravelled man and an enthusiastic lover of Gothic architecture, interesting beyond expression: yet I would much rather be here.

For this is Saturday morning, and my parish is far away. There is no sermon to be thought of for to-morrow; and no multitude of sick folk to see; no pressure of manifold parochial cares. This is a very ugly cottage by a beautiful shore; and, through a simple pecuniary negotiation, the cottage is ours for the months of August and September. Looking up from this table, and looking out of the window, the first object you would see is a shaggy little fuchsia, covered with red flowers, waving about in a warm western wind. Beyond, there is a small expanse of green grass, in which I see, with entire composure, a good many weeds which would disquiet me much if the grass were my own. The little lawn is bounded by a wall of rough stone, half concealed by shrubs. And on the farther side, the top of the wall cutting sharp against it, weltering and toiling now in shadow, but a minute ago bright in sunshine, with the unnumbered dimple of little waves, spreads the sea. Now it has brightened again; and

three gleaming sails break the deep blue. Opposite, a few miles off, there are grand Highland hills. Sometimes they look purple; sometimes, light blue; sometimes the sunshine shows a yellow patch of cornfield. Never, for more than an hour or two, do those hills and this sea look the same. They are always changing; and the changes are extreme. You could no more tell a stranger what this place is like, by describing it ever so accurately as it is at this moment, than you could worthily represent the most changeful human face by a single photograph. In the sunset you may often see what will make you understand the imagery of the Revelation, — a sea of glass mingled with fire; then the mountains are of a deep purple hue, such as you would think exaggerated if you saw it in a picture. Hardly have the crimson and golden lights faded from the smooth water, when a great moon, nearly full, rises above the trees on this side, and casts a long golden path, flickering and heaving; the stillness is such that you fear to break it by a footfall. Then there have been times, even within this week, when drenching showers darkened the water and hid the opposite hills; or when white-crested waves made the sea into a wild, ridgy plain, and broke on the shingle hard by in foam and thunder.

This is not a fashionable watering-place; you go back to a quiet and simple life, coming here. No band of music plays upon the black wooden pier, where the rare steamboat calls daily. There is no such thing as a gay promenade, frequented by brightly dressed people desirous to see and to be seen. There is no reading-room, no billiard-room, no circulating library, no hotel,

no people who let out boats, no drinking-fountain. There is a post-office ; but it is a mile distant. You would find here no more than a line of detached houses, a few extremely pretty, and more of them extremely ugly, reaching for somewhat more than a mile along the sea-shore. The houses, each with its shrubbery and lawn, greater or less, stand on a strip of level ground between the sea and a rocky wall of cliff, which follows the line of the beach at no great distance ; doubtless an ancient sea margin. But now it serves as a beautiful background to the pretty houses, and it almost redeems the ugly ones ; it is covered richly with trees, which through ages have rooted themselves in the crevices of the rock ; and where the perpendicular wall forbids that vegetation, it is clothed with ivy so luxuriant, that you would hardly think those hearty leaves ever knew the blighting salt spray. By the sea-shore there runs a highway ; the waves break within a few yards on a beach of rough shingly gravel. It is to be confessed, that this charming place lacks the level sand which the ebbing tide leaves for a firm, cool walking space at some time of every day. But your walks are not confined to the path to right and left along the sea-shore. You will discover pleasant ways, that lead to the country above the wooded and ivied cliff ; and there you will find ripening harvest fields, and paths that wind through fragrant woods of birch, oak, and pine, and here and there the mountain-ash, with its glowing scarlet berries. But it is not what one understands by a *country side* : the whole landscape is gradually, but constantly, sloping upwards, till it passes into dark heathery hills, solitary as Tadmor in the wilderness. There the sportsman goes

in search of grouse and deer ; and thence you have views of the level blue water far below you, that are worth going many miles to see.


There are places along this seaside where your only walk is beside the sea. The hills rise almost from the water, an expanse of shadeless heather. But we are happier with our shady woodland walks. When the glare and heat are oppressive along the shore in the vacant afternoon, let us turn away from the road that skirts the beach, up this thickly wooded glen, through which a stream brawls from rock to rock, hardly seen for the leaves. You will not walk for a few yards under the pleasant shadow, till you find yourself so environed with ivy-grown trees, honeysuckle and wild flowers, that you might fancy the sea many miles off. And the oppressive light and heat and dust are gone. Let us go on, following the windings of the path and the water, till we reach a spot where a clear little brook, tumbling over rocks from far above us, crosses the road under a rude arch, to join the larger stream ; and now let us sit down on a great stone, where the little brook, close by our feet, makes a leap into the dark entrance of the bridge. Here let us rest and be thankful. Many people find this a feverish world : let us rejoice in a nook so green and quiet. Ferns of many kinds cover the damp rocks : there is a thick canopy of green leaves overhead, through which you may see blinks of the brightest blue sky ; and through which you may see an intense flickering of light, where the sun is struggling to pierce the dense shade. The air is fragrant and cool and moist : all around there is a thicket of evergreens and underwood, over which the tall trunks arise whose spreading branches *make our grateful shadow.*

We have all, young and old, wearied for this time ; and here it is at last. The cheerful anticipation of it was something to help one through laborious summer days. For if you are to be in the country no more than two months in the year, the months beyond question should be August and September. Let us keep our cake as long as we can ; let us make our holiday season late. June and July are delightful months amid rural scenes ; but it would be dismal to go back to the hot town at the end of July, and think one had settled down for the winter. But, at the beginning of October, a little space of long dark evenings, and the growing crispness of the morning air, help to make one feel ready to take with good heart to the laboring oar again.

Yet, though this holiday time be so enjoyed by anticipation, I think that when the day comes on which you preach to your own congregation for the last time before leaving, you feel it rather a trial ; and you turn your back upon your church with some regret and some misgiving. A clergyman's work is not like any other ; you have not quite the school-boy's feeling when working days are over and holidays begin. For your work is not merely your duty, it is your happiness too ; and though some folk may not understand it, you feel it something of a privation to think on a Sunday in your play-time that the bells are ringing, and the people assembling in the familiar place, and you not there. Happily, there are regions in this world where the clergyman's last Sunday at church, is likewise the last Sunday at church of a great part of the congregation. It is gathered, as usual, one day ; and the next, scattered far and wide, by the seaside and among the hills.

And in this uncertain world, where when many hundreds of human beings are in one place to-day, no one can say who may be missing when they meet after some weeks' separation, I think that you, my friend, will preach with special kindness and heartiness on your last Sunday at home; and that you will be heard with special attention and sympathy. There will be a very perfect stillness as you pronounce the blessing for what may be the last time. And you will well remember the words and the music of the parting hymn. Taking your final look round your vestry, and round your emptied church, as you come away, you will feel the sorrow and anxiety which come of the vain delusion common to man, that the place where you worked and labored your best will not go on quite as well in your absence. Ah, my friend, some day you and I must leave our several churches for ever; and though we shall be kindly remembered and missed there for a while, they will come by and by to do without us. And very fit and right too. We are not such self-conceited fools as to wish it were otherwise. Yet it is cheering, each Tuesday morning through the holidays, when the letter comes by post, in which a kind friend, whom duty ties to his town work at this season, tells how all went well in the services of the Sunday before.

Then, following that parting day, comes one of confusion and worry and fatigue,—the day on which the family accomplishes the journey to the distant resting-place. Would that the age might come when human beings shall be able to do without baggage! Yet even baggage serves good moral ends. You are very thankful indeed, when, in the quiet evening, the cottage, or



the more ambitious dwelling, is reached at last ; and the manifold packing-cases, being counted up, are found to be all right. During the day, several times, you had quite resigned yourself to the conviction that half of them would never be found more.

There are simple statements which may be repeated many times, while yet no wise man will pull you up by declaring that he has heard the like before ; for such simple statements are the irrepressible outflow of the present happy mood and feeling. You could not help uttering such, to any one to whom you might be talking out your heart. Suffer me now to declare, that there is no more precious blessing than rest. "The end of work is to enjoy rest." "The end and the reward of toil is rest." Yes, it is delightful to rest for a while from even the most congenial and beloved work. And rest is not merely delightful ; it is needful. The time comes when the task drags heavily ; when it is got through heartlessly, and by a painful effort often renewed. Most busy men, busied with work that wears the brain and nervous system, have some little time of rest in their daily round, — some precious hour of quiet. There is generally the short breathing space between dinner and tea. But, as months pass, the nerves grow so irritable that many sounds and circumstances worry you ; then is the hour when the organ-grinder painfully thrills you through. At this stage, busy men find the relief of a little pause, — a day or two away from work, no matter where. Arnold said, that the most restful days of the year were those spent in the long journeys by coach between Rugby and Fox How. A very eminent

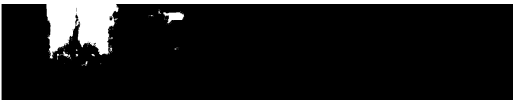
and over-driven man lately told me, that when he is being wrought into a fever, he finds rest by going to London by the express train, and returning the next day. The distance is four hundred miles going, and the like returning, — eleven hours either way. But it is enjoyable to lean back in the carriage ; to read and to muse, — sure that no one will speak to him on the business of his profession. I have heard of a great man who found the like relief in going to bed for two days or so. There was physical repose ; and even the unreasonable caller and tormentor, who would utterly disregard the assurance that the Doctor was weary and could see no one, was beaten by the assurance that the Doctor was in bed. For the average human being, on being told that the Doctor could see no one, would instantly say, “ O, but I know he will see me ! ” But not even these retreats will stay the gathering weariness which grows on body and mind as the seasons pass. And if you have been at work from the beginning of October to the end of July, — ten months with little relaxation, — then you have fairly earned the autumn holiday-time. And your rest will be not merely the reward of past work, but the preparation for future. You are laying up the strength, spirit, and patience needful for the winter months, if you are to see that time. And you must act on the calculation that you are to see it. On dark Sunday afternoons in January, when gas is lit throughout the church, and snow lies in the wintry streets, you may preach your sermon with the greater heart and vigor for the hours you sit now on a stone by the seaside, looking at the waves, and for the bracing breezes that supply the ozone the city lacks. So the diligent clergyman is as

much in the way of duty while enjoying his autumn rest as while fulfilling the work of the remainder of the year.

That you may thoroughly enjoy the autumn holidays, it is essential that you should feel that they have been fairly earned by long and hard work. You cannot feel the delight of rest, unless by contrast with toil, hurry, and weariness. All this quiet and beauty, to you and me grateful as water to the thirsty, would be to people who habitually live an idle life no better than something insufferably dull and stupid. Let us hope that we have faithfully gone through the previous discipline, that will make us relish simple quiet and peace. Some people think it shows humility to say things against themselves which they know are not true. They meekly confess sins of which they are aware they are not guilty ; saying what they suppose must be true, instead of what they feel to be true. Let us never do the like. Few things are more fatal to a true and honest spirit. For myself, I will say, without reserve, that in these last ten months I have worked to the very best of my ability and strength to fulfil my duty. And, if not very much after all, I have done what I could. I can say the like for certain dear friends in my own profession. They never wilfully neglect any work ; they never see any thing that ought to be done, without trying to do it. Unprofitable servants, doubtless, in the sight of One above us ; but, at least, we can look our fellow-men in the face.

I suppose, my readers, we have all a picture in our minds of the ideal autumn holidays. They never have come ; they are never to be. Yet we can think of

broad harvest fields, golden in sunshine ; of magnificent trees, the growth of centuries ; of green glades, with the startled deer ; of the gray Gothic dwelling, large and hospitable ; of a mode of life in which sickness, anxiety, vague fears, and pinching efforts to save shillings, are quite unknown. Yes, it is to be admitted that this ugly little cottage and its surroundings, physical and moral, are no more than a makeshift. But then, my friend, what more is all our life, and all our lot ? We must make them do ; we have great reason to be thankful for things as they are : but all this is not what we used to think of, when we were little children or hopeful youths. Let us train ourselves to look at lights rather than darks. There is such a thing as an eye for lights, and such a thing as an eye for darks. You know, when you look at a grand Gothic window, — the eastern window of a noble church ; and when you look at a much smaller Gothic window, you may look either at the dark tracery of stone, or at the lights of gorgeous storied glass. Now, in a physical sense, it is well to look at each in turn. You may behold a really excellent window by this, — that the darks are beautiful in form, if you fix your attention on them only ; and the lights are likewise beautiful in form, if you consider them by themselves. An inferior architect will give you the tracery beautiful, but the lights shapeless ; or the lights pretty, but the tracery ugly. But, though it is well physically to have an eye for both darks and lights, it is best, usually, to look mainly at lights, as you contemplate the grand Gothic window of your lot and of circumstances. For many people look at the darks to the exclusion of the lights. They dwell on the worries of their condition, to the for-



getfulness of its blessings and advantages. They contemplate the smoky chimney of their dining-room, to the forgetfulness of a hundred good things. They try to get other people to do the like. My friend Smith told me, that, once on a time, he had Mr. Jones to preach in his church. Smith's church holds fifteen hundred people, and it is perfectly filled by its congregation; of this circumstance Smith is pardonably proud. When Mr. Jones preached, the church was quite crowded, save that three seats (not pews, seats for a single person each) were vacant in a front gallery. But so keen was Mr. Jones's eye for darks, to the oblivion of lights, that after service he merely said to Smith, that he had remarked three seats empty in the gallery. Not one thought or word had he for the fourteen hundred and ninety-seven seats that were filled. Smith was a little mortified. But by and by he remembered, that the peculiar disposition of Mr. Jones was one that would inflict condign punishment upon itself. Then he was sorry, rather than angry. Yes, my friend, let us be glad, if we have an eye for the lights of life, rather than for its darks!

It is curious, how very soon the burden drops from one's back, when you come for your holidays to some place far away from your home and your duty. The relief is in direct proportion to the distance in miles. A hundred miles will suffice; a thousand are better. Very lightly does the care of your parish rest on you, when the parish is a thousand miles distant! Even a tenth part of that amount makes one feel as a horse must, when its harness is removed, and its shoes taken off, and it is turned out to grass. As you put on a

tweed suit, and adopt a wide-awake hat, you forget the responsibilities and labors of past months ; you cease to be the same man. The careful lines are smoothed out of your face ; the hair pauses in growing gray. It is necessary, indeed, to the true sense of rest, that you should have the feeling of a good long horizon of time before you. A few days in the country, with the feeling that you are just going back to work, will not do ; the feverish pulse will keep by you. It is quite a different thing, when you know you have several weeks in prospect. Then you expatiate ; then you truly rest. Those good men who remain within a few miles of their parish, and who go back for each Sunday's duty, do not enjoy the feeling of the holiday-time at all. And feeling is the reality. It is not what a thing is in itself, but how it presents itself to you. You know how different a thing a railway-station, thirty miles from home, looks to you when you are to stop at it, and when you are to go on three hundred miles further.

It is pleasant, and at first a little perplexing, instead of setting to work after breakfast, to go forth and wander about the shore, or sit on a rock as long as you please, with the sense that you are neglecting nothing that needs to be done. You feel, as regards time, as a poor man who has suddenly inherited a large fortune must feel towards money. Strange, to have so much to spare of the thing of which before one had so little ! And how misty and unreal the scenes and the life that are distant and past grow to be ! I cannot at this minute, sitting on a warm stone by the sea in the morning sunshine, feel that at the entrance to a certain square stands in this same sunshine, with a little shrub-

bery before it, a certain church, Ionic as to its front elevation, which the writer well knows. It is always there when I go back; but I do not know what becomes of it in the mean while.

There is nothing more certain than this, that it will not answer to go to your resting-place to spend your holiday-time, without having thought of what you are to do while there. If the truth were told, it would be the confession of many men, that the enjoyment of their holidays was all in the anticipation and the retrospect; and that the holidays themselves were a very disappointing and tiresome time, very listless and weary. All this comes of their vaguely believing that, to enjoy the season of rest, all you have to do is to go to some quiet, retired place, and then some occupation will suggest itself, some mode of getting the due enjoyment out of the long-expected time. A clergyman might just as wisely ascend his pulpit, without having thought of what he is to say from it of his text and his sermon, and count upon these turning up at the moment they are needed. Before going to the seaside, you should carefully consider what you are to do there, and map out some little plan of life; not adhering to it, of course, should some pleasant deviation suggest itself. And every one must devise such a plan for himself, according to his own liking. Only let it be remembered, that it will not do to be absolutely vacant. Time will hang heavy; and then enjoyment is at an end. Different men have devised different modes of light occupation for their holiday-time; and that which suited one man might be most unsuitable for another. Mr. Jay, the eminent Non-conformist of Bath, tells us that it helped

him to thoroughly enjoy his vacation, to write one little sermon in the morning of each day, and another in the evening. The sermons were certainly very brief; you might read each in five minutes; yet not every preacher would have regarded it as recreation to produce them. There are very many to whom sermon-writing does not come so easily; to whom a sermon is the thought of a week, not the diversion of an hour. Let it be said, that Mr. Jay's little sermons now fill four volumes, under the title of *Morning and Evening Exercises*; they provide a little pious reading for the mornings and evenings of a year. The writer is so very warm a Churchman, that he seldom looks at the volumes without regretting that the good man was not one; the more so, as it is plain that no conscientious scruple kept him out of his national church. Yet, let it be said, that if you read the little discourses daily, for a year, you will leave off with a very kindly and pleasant impression of their author. It is not that any one discourse is in any way specially brilliant, but that all are so evenly good; and they treat, in the most admirable spirit, not the matters on which good Christians differ, but those on which they all agree.

For men to whom the writing of sermons is not relaxation, but rather work, yet whose likings are quiet and scholarly, certain rules may be suggested. In addition to the physical employment of mountain excursions, yachting, riding, shooting, and the like, let abundance of reading be provided. Let the *Times* daily tell how the great world goes; let plenty of other newspapers come besides. Thus post-time will be a fresh sensation, even if very few letters appear, and these of

very small interest. And, besides as many pleasant new books as you can get, let there be some large work, of many volumes, read perhaps long ago, yet worth reading again, and which could not be read satisfactorily amid the pressure of working days and months. And weeks before you come to the seaside, consider what this book shall be. Mine, this year, is Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*,—an admirable history of a great and good man. If you have read it as a boy, read it once more as a man; and you will find how well you remember it. It is a sad history, certainly; and you will find many things to be thought of with deep regret: yet you will rise from it with a hearty admiration and affection for the greatest Scotchman. And often, as you go on, you will come on passages that will make you pause and muse, with the finger in the half-closed book.

But the writer's special occupation during these holidays is to revise and consider the essays which make up this volume. He has very little time now for writing such; and the little time is growing less. The spare hours of two years have gone to the production of this little book. It will always be pleasant to look back on time so pleasantly spent. And these chapters have already met so kind a reception, as they appeared in that dear old magazine in which the writer saw his earliest article in print and his latest, and in another magazine which professes to publish good words, though some people have declared it to be a bad and dangerous periodical, that the indulgent reader may easily understand how this volume has been added to the list of certain which have gone before. Let me wish for this

book, that it may fall into as kind hands as the rest, and into as many.

It is a great thing to have some occupation, in a time and place like this, which implies no exertion. It is pleasant for a very small author to sit down on a rustic seat, under a shady tree, or on a rock by the sea, with the murmuring water lapping at one's feet; and there peacefully to read over one's essay. A distinguished American author has put on record the feelings with which he read his own first book. He says frankly, "I never read a more interesting volume!" Under the shadow of that illustrious precedent, it may be confessed, that though, when busy with serious work, you have something else to do than to read your own compositions, yet, in a season of leisure, it is light and pleasant employment for an author to do so. Somebody, once on a time, sent me a lengthened and friendly criticism of these essays, in which it was yet mentioned, as a ground of complaint, that no mental exertion was needful to follow them. That is precisely what their author wished; and he will be too glad to think that it is so. He has pioneered the road, through the jungle and up the pass: he trusts it is smooth and easy. Yet let it be said, that what is easy to read is, for the most part, difficult to write.

Let me be allowed a closing word. Why does the writer call himself a *country parson*? Years have passed since he left that beautiful green valley, with the river, the trees, and the hills, and went to a great city. But country parson is the name that suits him, and the name by which many kind friends know him. So he calls himself by it, just as his friend Smith calls

himself Smith. It is not that that individual is a smith in fact; but that Smith is the name by which people have agreed to call and know him. The ancestor who first bore the name was in fact a smith; and the name of Smith continued to be handed down, after the fact of smith ceased. So let it be with the author's cherished designation.

And there is more. Though he now does the duty of a parish in a great city, it is the city in which, above all others, country and town are mingled in the most charming way. In the parish which he serves, you may even find beautiful shady walks, and expanses of grass and flowers, where you might think yourself far from town smoke and bustle; and indeed you are: for in that most beautiful of cities, there is no smoke and little bustle. May it be always so.





## CHAPTER II.

### CONCERNING UNPRUNED TREES.

**I**N this writing-table, here in a great city, there lie two large pruning-knives, unused for five years. They look inconsistent enough with the usual belongings of the work-room of the incumbent of a town parish, who, on week-days, walks about chiefly upon paving-stones, and on Sundays preaches to city folks. But Britons know that there are institutions which the wise man would preserve, though their day and their use have passed away; so is it with these knives, — buckhorn as to their handles, and black with rust as to their blades. The writer will never cast them away; will never lock them up in a drawer rarely visited, degrading them from the prominent and easily reached spot where they lay in years that are gone. Never again, in all likelihood, will those knives be used by the hand that was wont to use them; yet they serve their owner well when they bring back the pleasant picture of days when he was a country parson, and pruned many shrubs and trees; walking about leisurely in the enjoyment of snipping off, as a schoolmaster of my youth was accustomed to walk

down the rows of boys, busy in writing, here and there coming down with a heavy lash on some unlucky back, merely for his own recreation, and with no moral aim. Yes, there is a tranquil delight in pruning; to a simple and unfevered mind, it is a very fascinating pursuit. And it is a good sign of a man, if he finds pleasure in it. Alas, we outgrow the days in which it makes us happy to prune trees!

The reader, who is given to pruning, knows how very much some trees need it. You know how horribly awkward and ugly an old bay becomes, after it has been untended for years. It has great branches which stick out most ungracefully. And it is likely enough that the whole tree is so inextricably grown into that ungainly form, that it is best to saw it off about three or four feet from the ground, and to let it begin to grow anew. Thus, starting afresh, you may be able to make it a pretty and graceful object, though of much diminished size. There are trees whose nature is such that they can do with little or no pruning. They don't need to be watched; they cost no trouble. Such is a Portugal laurel; such is a weeping birch; such is a beech; such is an oak. But not such is an Irish yew; not such is an apple-tree, nor any kind of fruit-tree. And in the days when you were the possessor of trees, and were sometimes a good deal worried by the charge of them, I know you often thought what a blessing it is that there are some that need no pruning; some that, once put in their place, you may let alone. For there were some that needed ceaseless tending; they grew horrible, unless you were always watching them, and cutting off this and that little shoot that was growing in a wrong direc-

tion. It was an awful thing, standing beside some tree that had given you a great amount of trouble, to think what it would come to if it were just left to itself.

Most human beings are very like the latter order of trees ; they need a great deal of pruning. Little odd habits, the rudiments of worse habits, need every now and then to be cut off and corrected. We should all grow very singular, ridiculous, and unamiable creatures, but for the pruning we have got from hands kind and unkind, from our earliest days ; but for the pruning we are getting from such hands yet. Perhaps you have known a man who had lived for forty years alone. And you know what odd shoots he had sent out ; what strange traits and habits he had acquired ; what singular little ways he had got into. There had been no one at home to prune him ; and the little shoots of eccentricity, of vanity, of vain self-estimation, that might have easily been cut off when they were green and soft, have now grown into rigidity. Woody fibre has been developed ; and if you were to try to cut off the oddity now, it would be like trying to lop off a tough oak branch a foot thick with a penknife. You cannot do it ; if you were to succeed in doing it, you would thereby change the whole man. Equally grown into rigid awkwardness with the man who has lived a very solitary life, the man is likely to be, who, for many years, has been the pope of a little circle of admiring disciples, no one of whom would ever contradict him, no one of whom would ever venture to say he judged or did wrong. In such a case, not merely are the angularities, the odd, ungainly shoots, not cut off ; they are actually fostered. And a really good man grows into a bundle of awk-

wardnesses and oddities, and stiffens hopelessly into these. And these greatly lessen his influence and usefulness with people who do not know his real excellences. You cannot read the life of Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, without lamenting that there was not some kind yet firm hand always near him, to prune off the wretched little shoots of self-conceit and silliness which obscured, in great measure, the sterling qualities of the man. You may remember reading how, on an occasion on which some good ladies had collected pieces of needle-work to be sold for a missionary purpose, he came to behold them. He skipped into the room, held up his hands in a theatrical ecstasy of admiration, and went through various ungainly gambols, and uttered various wretched jokes, by way of compliment to the good ladies. I don't tell you the story at length; it is too humiliating. Now do you think the good man would ever have done this, had he lived among people who durst question his infallibility and impeccability? What a blessing it would have been for him had there been some one on such terms with him that he could say, "Now, Simeon, dear fellow, don't make a fool of yourself!"

It is at once apparent, that when some really kind and judicious friend, or even some judicious person who is not a kind friend, says to you, as you are saying something, "Smith, you're talking nonsense; shut up, and don't make a fool of yourself," this fact is highly analogous to the fact of a keen pruning-knife snipping off a shoot that is growing in a wrong direction. And you may have seen a good man, accustomed to dwell among those who never dared to differ from him, look

as if the world were suddenly coming to an end, when some courageous person said to his face what many persons had frequently said behind his back ; to wit, that he was talking nonsense. You may find a house here and there in which the gray mare is the more energetic, if not the better horse ; where the husband has been constrained by years of outrageous ill-temper to give the wife her own way ; and where, accordingly, the mistress of the house has lived for thirty years without once being told she did wrong. The tree, that is, had never been pruned in all that time ; and you may imagine what an ugly and disagreeable tree it had grown. For people who get their own way have nothing to repress their evil and ridiculous tendencies, except their own sense of propriety ; and I have little faith in the practical guidance of that sense, unless it be reinforced and directed by the moral and æsthetic sense of other people. A tree, when pruned, suffers in silence ; no doubt, it cannot like being pruned ; it would like to have its own way. But the pruning of a human being, accustomed to his or her own way, is often accompanied by much moral kicking and howling. Such a person, in those years without pruning, has very likely got confirmed in many ridiculous and disagreeable habits ; has learned to sit with his feet upon the mantle-piece ; has come to use ungrammatical and ugly forms of speech ; has grown into rubbing his nose, or twirling his thumbs, or making pills of paper while conversing with others. Indeed there is no reckoning the ugly growths into which unpruned human nature will develop itself ; and self-conceited and haughty and petted folk deliberately deprive themselves of that salutary tending and pruning

which is needful to keep them in decent shape. There was once a man, who was much given to advocating the admission of fresh air; an excellent end. But, of course, in advocating it, the word *ventilation* had frequently to be used; and that man made himself ridiculous in the eyes of all educated people by invariably pronouncing the word as *ventulation*. For a long time, a youthful relative of that man suffered in silence the terrible annoyance of listening to the word thus rendered; and there are few more irritating things among the minor vexations of life than to be compelled habitually to listen to some vulgar and illiterate error in speech. Perhaps you have felt a burning desire to prune a person, who talked of some trouble being *tremenduous*; or who said, he would rather go to Jericho *as* hear Dr. Log preach; or who declared, the day to be *that* hot that he was nearly killed. Oh, the thought of such expressions makes one's nerves tingle, and one's hand steal towards the pruning-knife. But after long endurance, the youthful relative of the man who talked about *ventulation* could stand it no longer, and ventured humbly to suggest that *ventilation* was the preferable way of setting forth the word. Ah, the tree did not take the pruning peaceably! Wasn't there an explosion of vanity and spite and stupidity? Was not the youthful individual scorched with furious sarcasm, for pretending to know better than his seniors, and for venturing to think that his betters could go wrong! From that day forward, he resolved that however hideous the shoots of ignorance and conceit his seniors put forth, *he* would not venture to correct them. For there is nothing that so infuriates an uneducated and self-

sufficient man of more than middle age, as the faintest and best-disguised attempt to prune him. "Are you sure that your *data* is correct?" said a vulgar rich man to an educated poor man. "*Data* ARE correct, I think you mean," said the poor man (rather hastily), before going on to answer the question. The rich man's face reddened like an infuriated turkey-cock; and had there been a cudgel in his hand, he would have beaten the pruner upon the head. Yes; it is thankless work to wield the moral pruning-knife.

Probably among the class of old bachelors you may find the most signal instances of the evil consequence of going through life with nobody to prune one. I could easily record such manifestations of silliness and absurdity in the case of such men as would be incredible. Of course I am not going to do so. An old bachelor of some standing, living in a solitary house, with servants who dare not prune him, and with acquaintances who will not take the trouble to prune him, must necessarily, unless he be a very wise and good man, grow into a most amorphous shape. I beg the reader to mark the exception I make: for I presume he will agree with me when I say, that in the class of old bachelors and old maids may be found some of the noblest specimens of the human race. A judicious wife is always snipping off from her husband's moral nature little twigs that are growing in wrong directions. She keeps him in shape, by continual pruning. If you say anything silly, she will affectionately tell you so. If you declare that you will do some absurd thing, she will find means of preventing your doing it. And by far the chief part of all the common sense there is in this world

belongs unquestionably to women. The wisest thing a man commonly does are those which his wife counsels him to do. It is not always so. You may have known a man do, at the instigation of his wife, things so malicious, petty, and stupid, that it is inconceivable any man should ever do them at all. But such cases are exceptional.

My friend Jones, when a boy of fourteen, went to visit a relative, a rich old bachelor. That relative was substantially a very kind person; that is, he gave Jones lots of money, and the like. But Jones, an observant lad, speedily took his relative's measure. The first evening Jones was with him, the old bachelor said, in a very cordial way, "Now, Tom, my boy, it is my duty to tell you something. You have been trained up to believe that your father" (a clergyman) "is an able and dignified person. It is right that you should know that he is a very poor stick."

Jones listened, without remark, but with rather a scared face. It was a trial to the young fellow. It was a shock to his belief in things in general, to hear his father thus spoken of. And Jones, who is now a man, tells me that though he said nothing, he inwardly groaned, looking at his wealthy relative. "You're a horrid old fool." And in all the years that have passed since then, Jones assures me he has not in the least modified that early opinion.

Now, don't you feel that no married man would have so behaved? Even if he were such an ass as to begin to say such a thing to a little boy, don't you feel his wife (if present) would have taken care that the sentence was never finished?

The same person began to tell Jones about the opera ; and all of a sudden, to the lad's consternation, he burst out into some awful roars. Jones was terrified. He thought his relative had gone mad, or was suddenly seized by some unusual and terrible disease. But the old gentleman said, with great self-complacency, "That 's just to give you some idea what the human voice is capable of!" Jones secretly thought that it gave him some idea what a fool an old gentleman might make of himself.

I have heard of an extremely commonplace man, who lived an utterly solitary life in London. He had gained considerable wealth : but he had nothing else to stand on ; and he was not rich enough to stand on that alone. The worthy man has been in his grave for many years. Having heard that Mr. Brown had stated that he did not know him, he exclaimed : "He does not know ME ! Well, there is no act of Parliament to make people know about me. All I can say is, that if he does not know about me, he is an ill-informed man !" 'This was not a joke. It was said in bitter earnest. For when a young fellow who was present showed a tendency to smile at this outburst of self-conceit nursed in solitude, the young fellow was furiously ordered out of the room.

Doubtless you have remarked, with satisfaction, how the little oddities of men who marry rather late in life are pruned away speedily after their marriage. You have found a man who used to be shabbily and carelessly dressed, with a huge shirt-collar frayed at the edges, and a glaring yellow silk pocket handkerchief, broken of these things, and become a pattern of neatness. You have seen a man whose hair and whiskers were ridiculously cut speedily become like other human be-

ings. You have seen a clergyman, who wore a long beard, in a little while appear without one. You have seen a man, who used to sing ridiculous, sentimental songs, leave them off. You have seen a man who took snuff copiously, and who generally had his breast covered with snuff, abandon the vile habit. A wife is the grand wielder of the moral pruning-knife. If Johnson's wife had lived, there would have been no hoarding up of bits of orange peel, no touching all the posts in walking along the street, no eating and drinking with a disgusting voracity. If Oliver Goldsmith had been married, he would never have worn that memorable and ridiculous coat. Whenever you find a man whom you know little about, oddly dressed, or talking absurdly, or exhibiting any eccentricity of manner, you may be tolerably sure that he is not a married man. For the little corners are rounded off, the little shoots are pruned away, in married men. Wives generally have much more sense than their husbands, especially when the husbands are clever men. The wife's advices are like the ballast that keeps the ship steady. They are like the wholesome though painful shears, snipping off little growths of self-conceit and folly.

So you may see, that it is not good for man to be alone. For he will put out various shoots at his own sour will, which will grow into monstrously ugly and absurd branches, unless they are pruned away while they are young. But it is quite as bad, perhaps it is worse, to live among people with whom you are an oracle. There are many good Protestants who, by a long continuance of such a life, have come to believe their own infallibility much more strongly than the pope believes

his. An only brother amid a large family of sisters is in a perilous position. There is a risk of his coming to think himself the greatest, wisest, and best of men; the most graceful dancer, the most melodious singer, the sweetest poet, the most unerring shot; also the best-dressed man, and the possessor of the most beautiful hands, feet, eyes, and whiskers. And as the outer world is sure not to accept this estimate, the only brother is apt to be soured by the sharp contrast between the adulation at home and the snubbing abroad. A popular clergyman, with a congregation somewhat lacking in intelligence, is exposed to a prejudicial moral atmosphere. It is a dreadful sight to see some clergymen surrounded by the members of their flock. You see them, with dilated nostrils, inhaling the incense directly and indirectly offered. It irritates one to hear such a person spoken of (as I have heard in my youth) as "the dear man," "the precious man," or even, in some cases, "the sweet man." It is a great deal too much for average human nature to live among people who agree with all one says, and think it very fine. We all need "the animated No"; a forest tree will not grow up healthily and strong unless you let the rude blasts wrestle with it and root it firmer. It is insufferable when any mortal lives in a moral hot-house. And if there be anything for which a clergyman ought to be thankful, it is if his congregation, though duly esteeming him for his office and for his work, have so much good sense as to refrain from spoiling him by deferring unduly to all his crotchets. Let there be as few worsted slippers as possible sent him; no bouquets laid on his study table by youthful hands before he comes down stairs in the morning;

no young women preserving under a glass shade the glove they wore in shaking hands with him, that it may be profaned by no inferior touch. Let the phrase *dear man* be utterly excluded. A manly person does not want to be made a pet of. And if there be any occasion on which a man of sense, bishop or not, ought to be filled with shame and confusion, it is when man or woman kneels down and asks his blessing. Pray, how much is the blessing worth? What good will it do anybody? Most educated men have a very decided estimate of its value, which would be expressed in figures by a round O.

One great good of a great public school is the way in which the moral pruning-knife is wielded there. I do not mean by the masters, but by the republic of boys. Many a lad of rank and fortune, in whom the evil shoots of arrogance, self-conceit, contempt for his fellow creatures, and a notion that he himself is the mightiest of mortals, have been fostered at home by the adulation of servants, and cottagers, and tenantry, has these evil shoots effectually shred away. You have heard, of course, how the Duke of Middlesex and Southwark came to his title as a baby, and grew up under the care of obsequious tutors and governors till he had attained the age to go to school. The first evening he was there, he was standing at a corner of the playground, with a supercilious air, surveying the sports that were proceeding. A boy about his own size perceived him, and running up, said, with some curiosity, "Who are you?" "The Duke of Middlesex and Southwark," was the reply. "Oh," said the other boy, with awakened interest, "there's one kick for the

Duke of Middlesex and another for the Duke of Southwark"; and having thus delivered himself, he ran away. O, what a sharp pair of shears in that moment pruned off certain shoots which had been growing in that little peer's nature ever since the dawn of intelligence! The awful yet salutary truth was impressed, by a single lesson, that there were places in this world where nobody cared for the Duke of Middlesex and Southwark. And perhaps that painful pruning was the beginning of the discipline which made that duke, as long as he lived, the most unpretending, admirable, and truly noble of men.

There are few people in public life who in this age are not promptly pruned, where needful, by ever-ready shears. If the shoots of bumpiousness appear in a chief justice, they are instantly cut short by the tongue of some resolute barrister. If a prime minister, or even a loftier personage, evinces a disposition to neglect his or her duty, that disposition is speedily pruned by the *Times*; speaking in the name of the general sense of what is fit. And indeed the newspapers and reviews are the universal shears. If any outgrowth of folly, error, or conceit appear in a political man, or in a writer of even moderate standing, some clever article comes down upon it, and shows it up if it cannot snip it off. And if a wise man desires that he may keep, intellectually and æsthetically, in becoming shape, he will attentively consider whatever may be said or written about him by people who dislike him. For, as a general rule, people who don't like you come down sharply upon your real faults; they tell you things which it is very fit that you should know, and which

nobody is likely to tell you but them. I have heard of one or two distinguished authors who made it a rule never to read anything that was written about themselves. Probably they erred in this. They missed many hints for which they might have been the better. And mannerisms and eccentricities developed into rigid boughs, which might have been readily removed as growing twigs.

A vain self-confidence is very likely to grow up in a man who is never subjected to the moral pruning-knife. The greatest men (in their own judgment) that you have ever known have probably been the magnates of some little village, far from neighbors. Probably the bully is never developed more offensively than in some village dealer, who has accumulated a good deal of money, and who has got a number of the surrounding cottages mortgaged to him. Such is the man who is likely to insult the conservative candidate, when he comes to make a speech before an election. Such is the man to lead the opposition to any good work proposed by the parish clergyman. Such is the man to become a church-rate martyr, or an especially offensive manager of Salem chapel. Such is the kind of man who, if he has children growing up, will refuse to let them express their opinion on any subject. A parent can fall into no greater mistake than to take the ground that he will never argue with his children, nor hear what they may have to suggest in opposition to any plan he may have proposed. For children very speedily take the measure of their parents; and have a perfectly clear idea how far their ability, judgment, and education justify their assuming the rank of infallible

oracles. And it is infinitely better to let a lad of eighteen speak out his mind, than to have him like a boiler ready to burst with repressed views and feelings, and with the bitter sense of a petty and contemptible tyranny. Something has already been said of women who acquire the chief power in their own houses; whose husbands are cowed into ciphers; and whose infallibility is to be recognized throughout the establishment, under pain of some ferocious explosion. At last, some son grows up, and resists the established despotism. Infallibility and impeccability are conceded no longer. And the thick branches, consolidated by many years' growth, are lopped off painfully, which should have gone when they were slender shoots. Rely upon it, the man or woman who refuses to be peaceably and kindly pruned, will some day have to bear being rudely lopped.

There is one shoot which human nature keeps putting forth again, however frequently it is pruned away. It is self-conceit. *That* would grow into a terrible unwieldy branch, if it were not so often shred away by circumstances; that is, by God's providence. Everybody needs to be frequently taken down; which means, to have his self-conceit pruned away. And what everybody needs, most people (in this case) get. Most people are very frequently taken down.

I mean, even modest and sensible people. This wretched little shoot keeps growing again, however hard we try to keep it down. There is a tendency in each of us to be growing up into a higher opinion of ourself; and then, all of a sudden, that higher estimate is cut down to the very earth. You are like a sheep suddenly shorn: a thick fleece of self-complacency had

developed itself; something comes and all at once shears it off, and leaves you shivering in the frosty air. You are like a lawn, where the grass had grown some inches in length, till some dewy morning it is mown just as close as may be. You had gradually and insensibly come to think rather well of yourself and your doings. You had grown to think your position in life a rather respectable or even eminent one, and to fancy that those around estimated you rather highly. But all of a sudden, some slight, some mortification, some disappointment comes; something is said or done that shows you how far you have been deceiving yourself. Some considerable place in your profession becomes vacant, and nobody thinks of naming you for it. You are in company with two or three men who think themselves specially charged with finding a suitable person for the vacant office: they name a score of possible people to fill it, but not you. They never have thought of you: or possibly they refrain from naming you, with the design of mortifying you. And so you are pruned close. For the moment, it is painful. You are ready to sink down, disheartened and beaten. You have no energy to do anything. You sit down blankly by the fire, and acknowledge yourself a failure in life. It is not so much that you are beaten, as that you are set in a lower place than you hoped. Yet it is all good for us, doubtless. Few men can say they are too humble with it all. And as even after all our mowings, prunings, and shearings, we are sometimes so conceited and self-satisfied as we are, what should we have been had those things not befallen us? The elf-locks of wool would have been feet in length. The grass would have been




CONCERNING UNPRUNED TREES.

59

six feet high, like that of the prairies. And the shoot of vanity would have grown and consolidated into a branch, that would have given a lopsided aspect to the whole tree.

Happily, there is no chance of these things occurring. We seldom grow for more than a few days, without being pruned, mown, and shorn afresh. And all this will continue to the end. It is not pleasant; but we need it all. And we are all profiting by it. Possibly no one will read this page, who does not know that he thinks more humbly of himself now than he did ten years since; and ten years hence, if we live, we shall think of ourselves more humbly still.

Yes: we have all been severely pruned, in many ways. Perhaps our sprays and blossoms have been shred away by a knife so unsparing, that we are cut very much into the form of a pollarded tree. Perhaps we have been pruned too much, and the spring and the nonsense taken out of us only too effectually. Certain awkward knots are left in the wood, where some cherished hope was snipped off by the fatal shears, or some youthful affection (in the case of sentimental people) came to nothing; and it was like cutting a tree over, not far above the roots, when a man was made to feel that his entire aim in life was no better than a dismal failure. But it was all for the best; and defeat, bravely borne, is the noblest of victories. What an overbearing, insolent person you would have been, if you had always got your own way, if your boyish fancies had come true! What an odd stick you would have become, had you been one of the Unpruned Trees!





### CHAPTER III.

#### CONCERNING UGLY DUCKS : BEING SOME THOUGHTS ON MISPLACED MEN.

**S**OME men's geese, it has occasionally been said, are all swans. Dr. Newman declares that this was so with the great Archbishop Whately of Dublin. Read this page, intelligent person ; and you shall be informed about an Ugly Duck, and what it proved in truth to be.

Rather, you shall be reminded of what you doubtless know already. The story is not mine : it was originally devised by somebody much wiser and possibly somewhat better. I propose to do no more than tell afresh and briefly what has been told at much greater length before. No doubt it has touched and comforted many to read it. For there may be much wisdom and great consolation in a fairy tale.

Amid a family of little ducks, there was one very big, ugly, and awkward. He looked so odd and uncouth, that those who beheld him generally felt that he wanted a thrashing. And in truth, he frequently got one. He was bitten, pushed about, and laughed at by all the ducks, and even by the hens, of the house to which he belonged. Thus the poor creature was quite

cast down under the depressing sense of his ugliness ; and the members of his own family used him worst of all. He ran away from home, and lived for a while in a cottage with a cat and an old woman. Here, likewise, he failed to be appreciated. For chancing to tell them how he liked to dive under the water and feel it closing over his head, they laughed at him, and said he was a fool. All he could say in reply was, " You can't understand me ! " " Not understand you, indeed," they replied in wrath, and thrashed him.

But he gradually grew older and stronger. One day he saw at a distance certain beautiful birds, snow-white, with magnificent wings. Impelled by something within him, he could not but fly towards them, though expecting to be repulsed and perhaps killed for his presumption. But suddenly looking into the lake below him, he beheld not the old ugly reflection, but something large, white, graceful. The beautiful birds hailed him as a companion. The stupid people had thought him an ugly duck, because he was too good for them. They could not understand him, nor see the great promise of that uncouth aspect. The ugly duck proved to be a Swan !


He was not proud, that wise bird ; but he was very happy. Now, everybody said he was the most beautiful of all beautiful birds ; and he remembered how, once upon a time, everybody had laughed at him and thrashed him. Yes : he was appreciated at his true value at last !

Possibly, my friendly reader, you have known various Ugly Ducks, — men who were held in little esteem, because they were too good for the people among whom

they lived,—men who were held in little esteem, because it needed more wit than those around them possessed to discern the makings of great and good things under their first unpromising aspect. When John Foster, many years ago, preaching to little pragmatic communities of uneducated, stupid, and self-conceited sectaries, was declared by old women and young whipper-snappers, to be A PERFECT FOOL, he was an Ugly Duck of the first kind. When Keats published his earliest poetry, and when Mr. Gifford bitterly showed up all its extravagance and mawkishness, and positively refused to discern under all that the faculties which would be matured and tamed into those of a true poet, Keats was an Ugly Duck of the second kind. John Foster was esteemed an Ugly Duck at the time when he actually was a Swan, because the people who estimated him were such blockheads that they did not know a swan when they saw one. Keats was esteemed an Ugly Duck, because he really was an awkward, shambling, odd animal; and his critic had not patience, or had not insight, to discern something about him that promised he would yet grow into that which a mere Duck could never be. For the creature which is by nature a Swan, and which will some day be known for such by all, may in truth be, at an early stage in its development, an uglier, more offensive, more impudent and forward, more awkward and more insufferable animal, than the creature which is by nature a Duck, and which will never be taken for anything more.

Yes, many men, with the gift of genius in them, many more, with no gift of genius but with a little more industry and ability than their fellows, are regarde

little better than fools by the people among whom they live; more especially if they live in remote places in the country, or in little country towns. Some day, the Swans acknowledge the Ugly Duck for their kinsman: and *then* all the quacking tribe around him recognize him as a Swan. Possibly, indeed, even then, some of the neighboring ducks who knew him all his life, and accordingly held him cheap till the world fixed his mark, will still insist that he is no more than an extremely Ugly Duck, whom people (mainly out of spite against the ducks who were his early acquaintances) persist in absurdly calling a Swan. I have beheld a Duck absolutely foam at the mouth, when I said something implying that another bird (whose name you would know if I mentioned it) was a Swan. For the Duck, at college, had been a contemporary of the Swan: he had even played at marbles with the Swan, in boyhood; and so, though the Swan was quite fixed as being a Swan, the Duck never could bear to recognize him as such. On the contrary, he held him as an overrated, impudent, purse-proud, conceited, disagreeable, and hideously Ugly Duck. I remember, too, a very venomous and malicious old Duck, who never had done anything but quack (in an envious and uncharitable way too) through all the years which made him very old and exceedingly tough, giving an account of the extravagances and bombastic flights of a young Swan. The Duck vilely exaggerated the sayings of that youthful Swan. He put into the Swan's mouth words which the Swan had never uttered, and ascribed to the Swan sentiments (of a heretical character) which he very well knew the Swan abhorred. But even



upon the Duck's own showing, there was the promise of something fine about the injudicious and warm-hearted young Swan; and a little candor and a little honesty might have acknowledged this. And it appeared to me a poor sight to behold the ancient Duck, with all his feathers turned the wrong way with spite, standing beside a dirty puddle, and stretching his neck, and gobbling and quacking out his impotent malice, as the beautiful Swan sailed gracefully overhead, perfectly unaware of the malignity he was exciting in the muscle which served the Duck for a heart.

It makes me ferocious, I confess it, to hear a Duck, or a company of Ducks, abusing and vilifying a Swan; and a good many Ducks have a tendency so to do. If you ask one of very many Ducks, "What kind of a bird is A?" (A being a Swan), the answer will be, "Oh, a very Ugly Duck!" If the present writer had the faintest pretension to be esteemed a Swan, he would not say this. But he knows very well indeed that he can pretend to no more than to plod humbly and laboriously along upon the earth, while other creatures sail through the empyrean. He has seen, with wonder, several ill-natured attacks upon himself in print, the *gravamen* of the charge against him being that he does not and cannot write like A, B, and C, who are great geniuses. Pray, Mr. Snarling, did he ever pretend to write like A, B, and C? No; he pretends to nothing more than to produce a homely material (with something real about it) that may suit homely folk. And so long as a great number of people are content to read what he is able to write, you may rely upon it he will go on writing. As for you, Mr. Snarling, of course *you* can write

like A, B, and C. And in that case, your obvious course is to proceed to do so. And when you do so, you may be sure of this; that the present writer will never twist nor misrepresent your words, nor tell lies to your prejudice.

It is a curious and interesting spectacle to witness two Ducks discussing the merits of a Swan. I have known a Duck attack a Swan in print. The Swan was an author. The Duck attacked the Swan on the ground that his style wanted elegance. And I assure you the attack, for want of elegance of style, was made in language not decently grammatical. You may have heard a Duck attack a Swan in conversation. The Swan was a pretty girl. The charge was that the Swan's taste in dress was bad. You looked at the Duck, and were aware that the Duck's taste was execrable. Would that we could "see ourselves as others see us!" Then you would no longer see such sights as this, which we may have witnessed in our youth. Two Ducks viciously abusing a Swan, flying by; and pointing out that the Swan had lost an eye, also a foot; and with wearisome iteration dwelling on those enormities. And when you looked carefully at the spiteful creatures, wagging their heads together, hissing and quacking, you were aware that (strange to say) each of them had but one foot and one eye, and that, in short, in every respect in which the Swan was bad, the Ducks were about fifty times worse. Thus you may have known a very small and shabby Duck, who scoffed at a noble Swan, because (as he said) the Swan had no logic. Yet whenever that Duck himself attempted to argue any question, he had but one course, which was scandalously to misrepresent

and distort something said by the man maintaining the other opinion, and then to try to raise against that man a howl of heresy. Not indeed that that man, or any one of his friends, cared a brass farthing for what the shabby little Duck thought or said of him. Yet the Duck showed all the will to be a viper, though nature had constrained him to abide a Duck. And this was the Duck's peculiar logic.

At this point the reader may pause, and ponder what has been said. If exhausted by the mental effort of attention, he may take a glass of wine. And then he is requested to observe, that the writer considers himself to have made but one step in advance since he finished the legend of the Ugly Duck, with which the present work commenced. That step in advance was to the principle:

THAT SOME MEN ARE HELD IN LITTLE ESTIMATION BECAUSE THEY ARE TOO GOOD FOR THE PEOPLE AMONG WHOM THEY LIVE. These are my MISPLACED MEN.

Of course, not all misplaced men are what I understand by Ugly Ducks. For there are men who are misplaced by being put in places a great deal too good for them. You may have known individuals who could not open their mouths but you heard the unmistakable *quack-quack*, who yet gave themselves all the airs of Swans. And probably a good many people honestly took them for Swans, and other people, prudent, safe, and somewhat sneaky people, pretended that they took them for Swans, while in fact they did not. And when perspicacious persons privately whispered to one another, "That fellow Stuckup is only a duck," it was be-

cause in fact he was no more. Yet Stuckup did not think himself so. I have not seen many remarkable human beings, but I have studied a few with attention; and I can say, with sincerity, that the peculiar animal known as the *Beggar on Horseback* is by far the greatest and most important human being I have ever known. Probably, my reader, you still hold your breath with awe, as you remember your first admission to the presence of a person whom you saw to be on horseback, but did not know to be a beggar who had attained that eminence. You afterwards learned the fact; and then you wondered you did not see it sooner. For now the beggar's dignity appeared to you to bear the like relation to that of the true man in such a place, that the strut of a king, with a tinsel crown, in a booth at a fair, bears to the quiet, assured air of Queen Victoria, walking into the House of Lords to open Parliament.

It is an unspeakable blessing for a man, that he should be put down among people who can understand him. For no matter whether a man is thought a fool by his neighbors because he is too good for them, or because he is really a fool, the depressing effect upon his own mind is the same; unless indeed he have the confidence which we might suppose would have gone with the head and heart of Shakespeare, if Shakespeare appreciated himself justly. Very likely he did not. John Foster, great man as he was, could not have liked to see the little meeting-houses at which he held forth gradually getting empty, as the people of the congregation went off to some fluent blockhead with powerful lungs and a vacuous head. For many a day Archbishop Whately of Dublin was a misplaced man; feared and suspected just because

that clear head and noble heart were so high above the sympathy or even the comprehension of many of those over whom he was set. A bitter little sectary would have been at first an infinitely more popular prelate; and the writer cannot refrain from saying with what delight, but a few months before that great man died, he saw, by the enthusiastic reception which the archbishop met, rising to make a short speech at a public meeting in Dublin of three thousand people, that justice was done him at last. He had found the place which was his due. They knew the noble Swan they had got, and knew that the honor he derived from the archiepiscopal throne was as a sand-grain when compared with the honor which he reflected on it. Yet he found the time hard to bear, when he was undervalued because he was too good; when men vilified him because they could not understand him. "I have tried to look as if I did not feel it," he said; "but it has shortened my life." Whereas our friend Carper, who for ten years past has held an eminent place for which he is about as fit as a cow, and which he has made ridiculous through his incompetence, — the wrong man in the wrong place, if such a thing ever was, — is entirely pleased with himself, and will never have his life shortened by any consideration of his outrageous incapacity. There were years of Arnold's life at Rugby during which he was an unappreciated man, just because he rose so high above the ordinary standard. If the sun were something new, and if you showed it for the first time to a company of blear-eyed men, they would doubtless say it was a most disagreeable object. And if there were no people of thoughtful hearts and of refined culture in the world, the author of *In*

*Memoriam* would no doubt pass among mankind for a fool. There are people who, through a large part of their life, are above the high-water-mark of popular appreciation. Wordsworth was so. He needed "an audience fit"; and it for many a day was "few." The popular taste had to be educated into caring for him. It was as if you had commanded a band of children to drink bitter ale and to like it. Even Jeffrey could write, "This will never do!" And you miss people as completely by shooting over their heads as by hitting the ground a dozen yards on this side of them. A donkey, in all honesty, prefers thistles to pine-apple. Yet the poor pine-apple is ready to feel aggrieved.

This misjudging of people, because they rise above the sphere of your judgment, begins early and lasts late. I have known a clever boy, under the authority of a tyrannical and uncultivated governor, who was savagely bullied and ignominiously ordered out of the room, because he declared that he admired the *Hartleap Well*. His governor declared that he was a fool, a false pretender, a villain. His governor sketched his future career by declaring that he would be hanged in this world, and sent to perdition in the next. All this was because he possessed faculties which his uncultivated tyrant did not possess. It was as if a stone-deaf man should torture a lover of music because he ventured to maintain that there is such a thing as sound. It was as if a man whose musical taste was educated up to the point of admiring the *Rutcatcher's Daughter* should vilipend and suspend by hemp a human being who should declare there was something beyond *that* in

Beethoven and Mendelssohn. And I believe that very often thoughtful little children are subjected to the great trial of being brought up in a house where they are utterly misunderstood by guardians and even by parents quite unequal to understanding them; and this has a very souring effect on the little heart. There are boys and girls, living under their fathers' roof, who in their deepest thoughts are as thoroughly alone as if they dwelt at Tadmor in the Wilderness. There are children who would sooner go and tell their donkey what was most in their mind than they would tell it to their father or their mother. In some cases, the lack of power to understand or appreciate becomes still more marked as childhood advances to maturity. You may have known a man recognized by the world as a very wise man for expressing to the world the self-same views and opinions whose expression had caused him to be adjudged a fool at home. "Do you know, Charlotte has written a book; and it's better than likely": was all the father of its author had to say about *Jane Eyre*. What a picture of a searing, blighting home atmosphere! You cannot read the story without thinking of evergreens crisping up under a withering east wind of three weeks' duration. And I could point to a country in Africa where men, who would be recognized as great men elsewhere, are thought very little of, because there is hardly anybody who can appreciate them and their attainments. I have known there an accomplished scholar, who in the neighboring kingdom of Biafra would be made a *clefrag* (corresponding to our bishop), who, living where he does, when spoken of at all, is usually spoken of contemptuously as A DOMINIE; corresponding

to our schoolmaster or college tutor, but the undignified way of stating the fact. Such a man is a great Greek scholar; but if he dwell among Africans, who know nothing earthly about Greek, and who care even less for it, what does it profit him? Alas, for that misplaced man! Thought an Ugly Duck because he lives at Heliopolis; while four hundred miles off, in the great University of Biafra, he would be hailed as a noble Swan by kindred Swans!

Almost the only order of educated men who have it not in their power to live among educated folk are the clergy. Almost all other cultivated men may choose for their daily companions people like themselves. But in the Church, you have doubtless known innumerable instances in which men of very high culture were set down in remote rural districts, where there was not a soul with whom they had a thought in common within a dozen miles. It is all right, of course, in that broader sense in which everything is so; and doubtless the cure of souls, however rude and ignorant, is a work worthy of the best human heart and head that God ever made. Still it is sad to see a razor somewhat inefficiently cutting a block, for which a great axe with a notched edge is the right thing. It is sad to see a cultivated, sensitive man in the kind of parish where I have several times seen such. You may be able to think of one, an elegant scholar, a profound theologian, a man of most refined taste, taken unhappily from the common-room of a college, and set down in a cold upland district, where there were no trees and where the wind almost invariably blew from the east; among people with high cheek-bones and dried-up complexions,

of radical politics and dissenting tendencies, dense in ignorance and stupidity, and impregnable in self-confidence and self-conceit, and just as capable of appreciating their clergyman's graceful genius as an equal number of codfish would be. And what was a yet more melancholy sight than even the sight of the first inconsistency between the man and his place was the sight of the way in which the man, year by year, degenerated till he grew just the man for the place, and only a middling man for it. Yes, it was miserable to see how the Swan gradually degenerated into an Ugly Duck; how his views got morbid, and his temper ungenial; how his accomplishments rusted, and his conversational powers died through utter lack of exercise; till after a good many years you beheld him a soured, wrong-headed, cantankerous, petty, disappointed man. For luck was against him; and he had no prospect but that of remaining in the bleak upland parish, swept by the east wind, as long as he might live. And after a little while, he ceased entirely to go back to the university where he would have found fit associates; and he grew so disagreeable that his old friends did not care to visit him, and listen to his moaning. Now, you cannot long keep much above what you are rated at. At least, you must have an iron constitution of mind if you do. I daresay sometimes in old days an honorable and good man was constrained by circumstances to become a publican; I mean, of course, a Jewish publican. He meant to be honest and kind, even in that unpopular sphere of life. But when all men shied him; when his old friends cut him; when he was made to feel, daily, that in the common estimation publicans and sinners

ranked together ; I have no doubt earthly but he would sink to the average of his class. Or, as the sweetest wine becomes the sourest vinegar, he might not impossibly prove a sinner above all the other publicans of the district.

But not merely do ignorant and vulgar persons fail to appreciate at his true value a cultivated man : more than this, the fact of his cultivation may positively go to make vulgar and ignorant persons dislike and under-rate him. My friend Brown is a clergyman of the Scotch Church, and a man who has seen a little of the world. Like most educated Scotchmen now-a-days, he speaks the English language, if not with an English accent, at least with an accent which is not disagreeably Scotch. He does not call a boat a bott ; nor a horse, a hoarrse ; nor philosophy, philozzophy ; nor a road, a rodd. He does not pronounce the word *is* as if it were spelt eez, nor talk of a lad of speerit. Still less does he talk of salvahtion, justificahtion, sanctificahtion, and the like. He does not begin his church service by giving out either a *sawm* or a *sanm* ; in which two disgusting forms I have sometimes known the word *psalm* disguised. Brown told me that once on a time he preached in the church of a remote country parish, where parson and people were equally uncivilized. And after service the minister confided to him that he did not think the congregation could have liked his sermon. "Ye see," said the minister, "thawt's no the style o' langidge they're used wi'!" My friend replied, not without asperity, that he trusted it was not. But I could see, when he told me the story, that he did not quite like to be an Ugly Duck ; that it irked him to think that, in

fact, some vulgar boor with a different style o' langidge would have been much more acceptable to the people of Muffburgh. I am very happy to believe that such parishes as Muffburgh are becoming few; and that a scholar and a gentleman will rarely indeed find that he had better, for immediate popularity, have been a clod-hopper and an ignoramus. You have heard, no doubt, how a dissenting preacher in England demolished the parish clergyman in a discourse against worldly learning. The clergyman, newly come, was an eminent scholar. "Do ye think Powle knew Greek?" said his opponent, perspiring all over. And the people saw how useless, and indeed prejudicial, was the knowledge of that heathen tongue.

And this reminds me that it will certainly make a man an Ugly Duck to be, in knowledge or learning, in advance of the people among whom he lives. A very wise man, if he lives among people who are all fools, may find it expedient, like Brutus, to pass for a fool too. And if he knows two things or three which they don't know, he had better keep his information to himself. Even the possession of a single exclusive piece of knowledge may be a dangerous thing. Long ago, in an ancient university near the source of the Nile, the professors of divinity regarded not the quantity of Greek or Latin words. The length of the vowels they decided in each case according to the idea of the moment. And their pronunciation of Scripture proper names, if it went upon any principle at all, went on a wrong one. A youthful student, named McLamroch, was reading an essay in the class of one of these respectable but antediluvian professors; and coming to the word *Thessa-*

*lonica*, he pronounced it, as all mortals do, with the accent on the last syllable but one, and giving the vowel as long. "Say Thessaloanica," said the venerable professor, with emphasis. "I think, *doctissime professor*," (for all professors in that university were *most learned* by courtesy,) "that Thessalonica is the right way," replied poor McLamroch. "I tell you it is wrong," shrilly shouted the good professor: "say Thessaloanica! and let me tell you, Mr. McLamroch, you are most abominably affectit!" So poor McLamroch was put down. He was an Ugly Duck. And he found by sad experience, that it is not safe to know more than your professor. And I verily believe, that the solitary thing that McLamroch knew, and his professor did not know, was the way to pronounce Thessalonica. I have heard, indeed, of a theological professor of that ancient day, who bitterly lamented the introduction of new fashions of pronouncing scriptural proper names. However, he said, he could stand all the rest; but there were two renderings he would never give up but with life. These were Kapper-nawm, by which he meant Capernaum; and Levvy-awthan, by which he meant Leviathan. And if you, my learned friend, had been a student under that good man, and had pronounced these words as scholars and all others do, you would have found yourself no better than an Ugly Duck. and a fearfully misplaced man.

A torrent of *wut*, sarcasm at new lights, and indignation at people who were not content to pronounce words (wrong) like their fathers before them, would have made you sink through the floor.

To be in advance of your fellow-mortals in taste, too,

is as dangerous as to be in advance of them in the pronunciation of Thessalonica. When Mr. Jones built his beautiful Gothic house in a district where all other houses belonged to no architectural school at all, all his neighbors laughed at him. A genial friend, in a letter in a newspaper, spoke of his peculiar taste, and called him the *preposterous Jones*. And it was a current joke in the neighborhood, when you met a friend, to say, "Have you seen Jones's house?" You then held up both hands, or exclaimed, "Well, I never!" Then your friend burst into a loud roar of laughter. In a severer mood, you would say, "That fellow! Can't he build like his fathers before him? Indeed he never had a grandfather. I remember how he was brought up by his aunt, that kept a cat's-meat shop in Muffburgh," and the like. All this evil came upon Jones, because he was a little in advance of his neighbors in taste. For in ten years, hardly a house round but had some steep gables, several bay-windows, and a little stained glass. Their owners esteemed them Gothic; and in one sense, undoubtedly, some of them were Gothic enough. In Scotland now people build handsome churches, and pay all due respect to ecclesiastical propriety. But it is not very long since a parish clergyman proposed to the authorities that a proper font should be provided for baptisms, because the only vessel heretofore used for that purpose was a crockery basin, used for washing hands; and one of the authorities exclaimed indignantly, "We are not going to have any gewgaws in our church": by gewgaws meaning a decorous font. What could be done with such a man? Violently to knock his head against a wall would have been wrong; for no man should be

visited with temporal penalties on account of his honest opinions. Yet any less decided treatment would have been of no avail.

We ought all to be very thankful, if we are in our right place; if we are set among people whom we suit, and who suit us; and among whom we need neither to practise a dishonest concealment of our views, nor to stand in the painful position of Ugly Ducks and Misplaced Men. Yes, a man may well be glad, if he is the square man in the square hole. For he might have been a round man in a square hole; and then he would have been unhappy in the hole, and the hole would have hated him. I know a place where a man who should say that he thought Catholic Emancipation common justice and common sense would be hooted down even yet; would be told he was a villain, blinded by Satan. There is a locality, where morality indeed is very low, but where a valued friend of mine was held up to reprobation as a dangerous and insidious man, because he declared in print that he did not think it sinful to take a quiet walk on Sunday. In that locality, one birth in every three is illegitimate; but it was pleasant and easy, by abuse of the rector of a London parish, and by abuse of others like him, to compound for the neglect of the duty of trying to break Hodge and Bill, Kate and Sally, of their evil ways. I know a place where you may find an intelligent man, out of a lunatic asylum too, who will tell you that to have an organ in church is to set up images and go back to Judaism. I have lately heard it seriously maintained that to make a decorous pause for a minute after service in church is over, and

pray for God's blessing on the worship in which you have joined, is "contrary to reason and to Scripture!" I know places where any one of the plainest canons of taste, being expressed by a man, would be taken as stamping him a fool. Now what would you do, my friend, if you found yourself set down among people with whom you were utterly out of sympathy; whose first principles appeared to you the prejudices of pragmatic blockheads, and to whom your first principles appeared those of a silly and Ugly Duck? One would say, "If you don't want to dwarf and distort your whole moral nature, get out of that situation." But then some poor fellows cannot. And then they must either take rank as Misplaced Men, or go through life hypocritically pretending to share views which they despise. The latter alternative is inadmissible in any circumstances. Be honest, whatever you do. Take your place boldly as an Ugly Duck, if God has appointed that to be your portion in this life. Doubtless, it will be a great trial. But you and I, friendly reader, set by Providence among people who understand us and whom we understand; among whom we may talk out our honest heart, and (let us hope) do so; in talking to whom we don't need to be on our guard, and every now and then to pull up, thinking to ourselves, "Now this sneaking fellow is lying on the catch for my saying something he may go and repeat to my prejudice behind my back"; how thankful we should be! I declare, looking back on days that have been, in this very country, I cannot understand how manly, enlightened, and honest men lived then at all! You must either have been a savage bigot, or a wretched sneak, or a martyr. The

alternative is an awful one ; but let us trust, my friend, that if you and I had lived then, we should, by God's grace, have been equal to it. Yes, I humbly trust that if we had lived then, we should either have been burned, hanged, or shot. For the days have been in which *that* must have been the portion of an honest man, who thought for himself, and who would be dra-gooned by neither pope, prelate, nor presbyter.

But now, having written myself into a heat of indig-nation, I think it inexpedient to write more. For it appears to me that to write or to read an essay like this ought always to be a relief and recreation. And those grave matters, which stir the heart too deeply, and tingle painfully through the nervous system, are best treated at other times, in other ways. Many men find it advisable to keep to themselves the subjects on which they feel most keenly. As for me, I dare not allow myself to think of certain evils of whose existence I know. Sometimes they drive one to some quiet spot, where you can walk up and down a little path with grass and evergreens on either hand, and try to forget the sin and misery you cannot mend : looking at the dappled shades of color on the grass ; taking hold of a little spray of holly, and poring upon its leaves ; stop-ping beside a great fir-tree, and diligently perusing the wrinkles of its bark.

So we shut up. So we cave in. O the beauty of these simple phrases, so purely classic !

---



## CHAPTER IV.

### OF THE SUDDEN SWEETENING OF CERTAIN GRAPES.

**M**ANY years since, on a sunshiny autumn day, a gentleman named Mr. Charles James Fox, a lawyer of eminence, was walking with his friend Mr. Mantrap through a vineyard near Melipotamus. A vineyard in that region of the earth is not the shabby field of what look like stunted gooseberry bushes which you may see on the Rhine. For trellised on high, from tree to tree, there hung the ripe clusters, rich and red. One cluster, of especial size and beauty, attracted the attention of Mr. Fox. He had in his hand a walking-stick (made of oak, varnished to a yellow hue), with a hook at its superior end. With this implement he sought to reach that cluster of grapes, with the view of appropriating it to his personal consumption, possibly upon the spot. But after repeated attempts, he found he could not in any way attain it. Upon this, Mr. Fox, a man of ready wit intellectually, but morally no more than an average human being, turned off the little disappointment by saying to his friend, "O, bother: I believe the grapes are as sour as the disposition of Mr. Snarling." The friends prose-

cuted their walk; but after they had proceeded a few miles, it occurred to Mr. Mantrap that Mr. Fox had depreciated the grapes because he could not reach them. Mr. Mantrap mentioned the occurrence to various acquaintances, and gradually it came to be that, in the circle of Mr. Fox's friends, SOUR GRAPES grew a proverbial phrase, signifying anything a human being would like to get, and, failing to get, cried down.

These facts, now given to the public in an accurate fashion, were lately made the subject of a short narrative in a little volume of moral stories published by an individual whose name I do not mention. But by one of those misapprehensions which naturally occur when a story is conveyed by oral tradition, that gentleman (of whom I desire to speak with the utmost respect) represented that the person who acted in the way briefly described was not Mr. C. J. Fox, the eminent lawyer, but the well-known inferior animal which is termed a fox. A moment's thought may show how impossible it is to receive such a representation. For it is extremely doubtful whether a fox would care to eat grapes, even if he could get a cluster of the very finest; while the notion that such an animal could express his ideas in articulate language is one which could not possibly be received, unless by illiterate persons, residing at a great distance from a university town.

Should the reader have had any difficulty in grasping the full meaning of what has been said, it is requested that he should pause at this point, and read the preceding paragraphs a second or even a third time before proceeding further.

Sometimes, in this world, people dishonestly say that the grapes they have failed to reach are sour, though knowing quite well that the grapes are sweet. In this case, these people desire to conceal their own disappointment; and (if possible) to make the value of the grapes less to such as may ultimately get them. Sometimes, in this world, when people have done their best to reach the grapes and failed, they come to honestly believe that the grapes *are* sour. They do, in good faith, cease to care for them, and resign their mind quite cheerfully to doing without them. But there is no reckoning up the odd ways in which the machinery of thought and feeling within human beings works; and it is the purpose of the present dissertation to notice two of these.

One is, that when you get the grapes, and specially if you get them too easily, the grapes are apt, if not exactly to grow sour, yet in great measure to lose their flavor. When you fairly get a thing, you do not care for it so much. Many people have lately been interested and touched by a truthful representation in the pages of a very graceful, natural, and pure writer of fiction, whose pages (I have learned with some surprise) various worthy people think it wrong to read. That graceful and excellent writer shows us how a certain young man sought the love of a certain young woman, and how when that young man (not a noble or worthy man indeed) found the love of that poor girl given him so fully and unreservedly, he came not to care for it, and to think he might have done better. Lead him out and chastise him, my friend; and having done so, look into your own heart, and see whether there be anything like him. If you be a wise person,

you may find reason severely to flagellate yourself. For it is the ungrateful and unworthy way of average human nature, to undervalue the blessings God gives us, if they come too cheaply and easily. Even Bruce, at the source of the Nile, thought to himself, "Is this all?" and Gibbon, looking out upon the Lake of Geneva, after writing the last lines of the *Decline and Fall*, tells us how he thought and felt in like manner.

This, however, is not my special subject. My subject is also connected with grapes; but it is a different phenomenon to which I solicit the reader's rapt and delighted attention. It is, how suddenly certain grapes grow sweet, when you find you can get them. You had no estimate at all of these grapes before, or you even thought them sour. But suddenly you find the hook at the end of your walking-stick can reach them, suddenly you find you can get them, and now you judge of them quite differently.

Many young women have thought, quite honestly, — and perhaps have said, in the injudicious way in which inexperienced people talk, — that they would not marry such and such a man upon any account. But some fine afternoon, the man in question asked them; and to the astonishment of their friends (some of whom would have been glad to do the like themselves), the young ladies gladly accepted the human being, held in such unfavorable estimation before. It just made all the difference, to find that the thing could be got. They began, all at once, to have quite a different estimate of the man; to think of him and of his qualifications in quite a different way. The grapes suddenly grew sweet; and instead of being contumeliously cast into the ditch, they were eaten with *considerable satisfaction*.

Even so have young clergymen, fresh from the university, thought that they would not on any account take such a small living or such a shabby church; and in a little while been very thankful to get one not so good. And I do not mean at present, in the case of either the young women or the young preachers, that they learn humbler ideas of themselves as time goes on, and come to lowlier expectations. *That*, of course, is true; but my present assertion is, that in truth when the thing is put within their reach, they come to think more highly of it; they come to see all its advantages and merits, they are not merely resigned to take it, — they are glad to get it. Many a man is now in a place in life, and very content and thankful to be there, which he would have repudiated the notion of his accepting very shortly before he accepted it with thankfulness.

The truth is, that if you look carefully, and look for some length of time, into the character of almost anything that is not positively bad, you will see a great deal of good about it. Friends in my own calling, do you not remember how, in your student days, you used to look at the shabby churches of our native land, where shabby churches are (alas!) the rule, and decorous ones the exception, and how you wondered then how their incumbents could stand them? You thought how much it would add to the difficulty of conducting public worship worthily to be obliged to do it under the cross-influence of a dirty, dilapidated barn, with a mass of rickety pews, where every arrangement would jar distressingly upon the whole nervous system of every man with a vestige of taste. You remember how your heart sunk as you


looked at the vile wagon-roofed meeting-house in a dirty village street, with no churchyard at all round it ; or with the mangy, weedy, miserable-looking pound which even twenty years since was in many places thought good enough for the solemn sleep of the redeemed body, still united to the Saviour. And you remember how earnestly you hoped that you might be favored so highly as to attain a parish where the church was a building at least decent, and if possible fairly ecclesiastical. And yet it is extremely likely you got a remarkably shabby church for your first one ; and it is in the highest degree probable that in a little you got quite interested in it, and thought it really very good. Of course, when my friend Mr. Snarling reads this, he will exclaim, What, is not the clergyman's work so weighty that it ought not to matter to him in the least what the mere outward building is like ? Is not the spiritual church the great thing ? may not God be worshipped in the humblest place as heartily as in the noblest ? And I reply to that candid person, who never misrepresented any one, and who never said a good word of any one, — Yes, my acquaintance, I remember all that. But still I hold that little vexatious external circumstances have a great effect in producing a feeling of irritation the reverse of devotional ; and I believe that we poor creatures, with our wandering thoughts and our cold hearts, are much more likely to worship in spirit, if we are kept free from such unfriendly influences, and if our worship be surrounded by all the outward decency and solemnity which are attainable. Give us a decorous building, I don't ask for a grand one ; give us quietude and order in all its arrangements ; give us church music that

soothes and cheers, and brings us fresh heart; give us an assemblage of seemingly devout worshippers. And these things being present, I do not hesitate to say that the average worshipper will be far more likely to offer true spiritual worship than in places to which I could easily point, where the discreditable building and the slovenly service are an offence and a mortification to every one with any sense of what is fit.

This, however, is by the bye. I could say much more on the subject. But I remember, thankfully, that it is a subject on which all educated persons now think alike, everywhere. It did not use to be so, once.

But not merely as regards churches, but as regards most other things, my principle holds true, that if you look carefully and for some time into the qualifications of almost anything not positively bad, you will discern a great deal of good about it. Take a very ordinary-looking bunch of grapes; take even a bunch of grapes which appears sour at a cursory glance: look at it carefully for a good while, with the sense that it is your own; and it will sweeten before your eyes. You pass a seedy little country house, looking like a fourth-rate farm-house: you think, and possibly say (if the man who lives in it be a friend of your own), that it is a wretched hole. The man who lives in it has very likely persuaded himself that it is a very handsome and attractive place. "What kind of manse have you got?" said my friend Smith to a certain worthy clergyman. "Oh, it is a beautiful place," was the prompt reply. It was in fact a dismal, weather-stained, whitewashed erection, without an architectural feature, with hardly a tree or an evergreen near it, standing on a bleak hill-

side. Smith heard the reply with great pleasure ; feeling thankful that by God's kind appointment a sensible man's own grapes seem sweet to him, which appear sour to everybody else, and to nobody sourer than to himself, before they became his own. The only wonder Smith felt was, that the good minister's reply had not been stronger. He was prepared to hear the good man say, " Oh, it is the most beautiful place in Scotland ! " For people in general cannot express their appreciation of things, without introducing comparisons, and indeed superlatives. If a man's window commands a fine view, he is not content to say that it does command a fine view : no, it commands " the finest view in Britain." If a human being has an attack of illness, about a hundredth part as bad as hundreds of people endure every day, that human being will probably be quite indignant, unless you recognize it as a fact, that nobody ever suffered so much before. Take an undistinguished volume from your shelves, read it carefully in your leisure hours for several evenings, and that undistinguished volume will become (in your estimation) an important one. My friend Smith, when he went to his country parish, was obliged for several months to have his books in large packing-boxes, his study not being ready to receive them. He lived in a lonely rural spot, for many wintry weeks, all alone. It was a charming scene around, indeed ; warm with green ivy and yews and hollies through the brief daylight, but dreary and solitary through the long dark evenings to a man accustomed to gas-lit streets. Soon after settling there, Smith chanced to draw forth from a box a certain volume, which had remained for months in his bookcase



unnoted: one among many more, all very like. And on every Sunday evening of that solitary time, Smith read in that volume. He read with pleasure and profit. Ever since then, he has thought the book a valuable and excellent one. It is distinguished among his books as the Bishop of Anywhere is among five hundred other clergymen; not that he is a whit wiser or better, but that he has been accidentally made more conspicuous. When Smith turns over its leaves now, the moaning of January winds through the pine wood comes back, and the brawl of a brook, winter-flooded. In brief, that cluster of grapes suddenly sweetened, because its merits were fairly weighed. If a thing be good at all, look at it and examine it, and it will seem better.

Now, a thing you have no chance of getting, you never seriously weigh the merits of. When you receive a half offer of a place in life, it is quite fair for you to say, "Offer it fairly and I shall think of it." You cannot take the trouble of estimating it now. It is a laborious and anxious thing to make up your mind in such a case. You must consider and count up and weigh possibly a great number of circumstances. You do not choose to undergo that fatigue, perhaps for no result. And if you be in perplexity what to do, the balance may be turned just by the fact that the thing is attainable. Hence the truth of that true proverb, that *Faint heart never won fair lady*. If you are fond of Miss Smith, and wish to marry her, don't speculate at home whether or not she will have you. Go and ask her. Your asking may be the very thing that will decide her to have you. And you, patron or electors of some little country parish which is vacant, don't say, "We

need never offer it to such and such an eminent preacher; he would never think of it!" Go and try him. Perhaps he may. Perhaps you may catch him just at a time when he is feeling weary and exhausted; when he is growing old; when your offer may recall with fresh beauty the green fields and trees amid which he once was young; when he is sighing for a little rest. I could point out instances, more than one or two, in England and in Scotland, in which a bold offering of a bunch of grapes to a distinguished human being induced him to accept the grapes; though you would have fancied beforehand that they would have been no temptation to him. I have known a man who (in a moral sense) refused a pine-apple, afterwards accept a turnip, and like it. We have all heard of a good man who might have lived in a palace, holding a position of great rank and gain, and of very easy duty, who put that golden cluster of grapes aside, and by his own free choice went to a place of hard work and little fame or profit, to remain there one of the happiest as well as one of the noblest and most useful of humankind! And the only way in which I can account for various marriages is by supposing that the grapes suddenly grew irresistibly sweet, just when it appeared that they could be had. You may have known a fair young girl quite willingly and happily marry a good old creature, whom you would have said *a priori* she was quite sure to refuse. But when the old creature made offer of his faded self (and his unfaded possessions), the whole thing offered acquired a sudden value and beauty. He might be an odd stick; but then his estate had most beautiful timber. Intellectually and morally he might be inferior

or even deficient ; but then his three per cents formed a positive quantity of enormous amount. The whole thing offered had to be regarded as one bunch of grapes. And if some of the grapes were sour and shrivelled, a greater number of them were plump and juicy.

Nobody who reads this page really knows whether he would like to be lord chancellor or to live in a house like Windsor Castle. The writer has not the faintest idea whether he would like to be Archbishop of Canterbury. We never even ourselves to such things as these. We don't seriously consider whether the grapes are sweet or sour, which there is not the faintest possibility of our ever reaching. When Mr. Disraeli (as he himself said in Parliament) "would have been very thankful for some small place," he had never lifted his eyes to the leadership of a certain great political party. Of that lofty cluster he had no estimate *then* ; but the modest little bunch of twelve hundred a-year seemed attainable, and so seemed sweet. But he was a great man when he said "I am very glad now I did not get it !" He was destined to something bigger and loftier. And when that greater position at last loomed in view, and became possible, became likely, — we can well believe that the great orator began to estimate it ; and that it became an object of honorable ambition when it was very near, and was all but grasped. When the prize is within reach, it becomes precious. When the Atlantic cable was being laid, you can think how precious it would seem when the vessels which were laying it had got within a mile or two of land. Yes, success, just within our grasp, grows inestimably valuable. The cluster of grapes, long striven after, and now at length just got hold of, — how sweet *it seems !*

My friend Mr. Brown had often remarked to me, "If ever there was a hideous erection on the face of the earth, it is that St. Sophia's Church; and I doff't know a man less to be envied than the incumbent of so laborious and troublesome a parish." Brown and I were sitting on the wall of his beautiful churchyard in the country one fine summer day, when he made this remark, adding, "How much happier a life we have here in this pure air and among these sweet fields" (and indeed the fragrance of the clover was very delightful that day), "and with our kindly, well-behaved country people!" I need hardly mention, that Mr. Brown shortly afterwards succeeded to the vacant charge of St. Sophia's, a huge church in a great city. He was offered it in a kind way; saw its claims and advantages in a new light; accepted it, and is very happy in it. And recently he recalled to my memory his former estimate of it, and said how mistaken it was. He even added, that, although the architecture of St. Sophia's was not the purest Gothic (it is in fact not Gothic at all), still there is a simple grandeur about it, which produces a great effect upon the mind when you grow accustomed to it. "I used to laugh," he said, "at poor old Dr. Log when he declared it was the finest church in Britain but, do you know, some of its proportions are really unrivalled. Here, for instance, look at that arch"; — and then he went on at considerable length. The truth was, that the grapes had suddenly sweetened. The position never thought of, or thought of only as quite unattainable, was a very different thing now.

I do not for a moment suppose any insincerity on the part of my friend. He quite sincerely esteemed the

grapes as sour, when they hung beyond his reach. He quite sincerely esteemed them as sweet, when he came to know them better. But, as a general rule, whenever any man or woman undervalues and despises something which average human nature prizes and enjoys, we may say that if the grapes are fairly put within reach, they would suddenly and greatly sweeten. I speak of average human nature. There are exceptional cases. There is a great and good man who did not choose to be a bishop, who did not choose to be an archbishop. The test is, that he was offered these places and refused them. But there are a great many men, who could quite honestly say that they don't want to be bishops or archbishops. But then they have not been tried; and there are some that I should not like to try. I believe the lawn would brighten into effulgence, when it was offered. The opportunity of usefulness would appear so great, that it could not in conscience be refused. The grapes, being within reach, would grow so sweet, that those good men would forget their old professions, and (in the words of Lord Castlereagh) turn their backs upon themselves.

Perhaps you have known a refined young lady of thirty-nine years, who looked with disdain at her younger female friends when they got married. She wondered at their weakness in getting spoony about any man, and despised their flutter of interest in the immediate prospect of the wedding-day and all its little arrangements. The whole thing — trousseau, cards, favors, cake — was contemptible. Perhaps you have known such a mature young lady get married herself at last, and evince a pride and an exhilaration in the prospect such as are

rarely seen. It was delightful to witness the maidenly airs of the individual to whom the bunch of grapes had finally become attainable ; the enthusiastic affection she testified towards the romantic hero (weighing sixteen stone) to whom she had given her young affections ; the anguish of perplexity as to the material and fashion of the wedding-dress ; in short, the sudden sweetening of the grapes which had previously been so remarkably sour. There is nothing here to laugh at : it is a beneficent providential arrangement. In all walks of life you may have remarked the same. You may have known a hard-featured and well-principled servant, who, having no admirer, gave herself out as a man-hater, and believed herself to be one. But some one turning up who (let us hope) admired and appreciated her real excellence, that admirable young woman grew quite tremendous : first, in her pride and exultation that she had a beau ; and secondly, in her admiration and fondness for him. Yes ; turn out human nature with a pitch fork ; and it will come back again.

Perhaps you have known a wealthy old gentleman, living quietly somewhere in the city (let the word be understood in its cockney sense), and going into no society whatever, who frequently professed to despise the vanities to which other folk attach importance. He utterly contemned such things as a fine house, a fashionable neighborhood, titled acquaintances, and the like ; and he did it all quite sincerely. But nature had her way at last. That wealthy gentleman bought a house in an aristocratic West End square. His elation at finding himself there was pleasing, yet a little irritating. He could not refrain from telling everyone that he lived

there. Occasionally he would cut short a conversation with a city acquaintance, by stating that he "must be home to dinner at half past seven in Berkeley Square." He speedily informed himself of the precise social standing of every inhabitant of that handsome quadrangle; and would even produce the "Court Guide," and tell an occasional visitor about the rank and connections of each name in the square. The delight with which he beheld a peer at his dinner-table may be conceived but not described. The grapes, in fact, had in all sincerity been esteemed as sour till he got possession of them. Then, all of a sudden, they became inconceivably sweet. So you may have beheld a plain, respectable man, who had made a considerable fortune in the oil trade, buy a property in the country and settle there. "I want nothing to do with your stuck-up gentry," said that respectable man. "I shall keep by my old friends Smith, Brown, and Robinson, who were apprentices with old McOily along with me, forty years ago." But when the carriage of the neighboring baronet drove up to the worthy man's door to call, it and its inmates were received with enthusiasm. There was, after all, a refinement of manner and feeling about gentle blood, not possessed by Smith and the others; and after a little intercourse with the family of the baronet, and with other similar families, poor Smith, Brown, and Robinson got so chilly a reception at the country house, and were so infuriated by the frequent mention and the high laudation of the landed families about (whom Smith and his friends did not know at all), that these old acquaintances quite dropped off; and the good old oil-merchant was left to the enjoyment of the grapes, formerly so

sour and now so sweet. It is all in human nature. You may have known a cultivated man, with a small income, living in a city of very rich and not remarkably cultivated men. You may have heard him speak with much contempt of mere vulgar wealth, and of certain neighbors who possessed it. And you felt how easily that cultivated man might be led to change his tune. I have witnessed a parallel case. Once upon a time, the writer was walking along a certain country road, a walk of nine miles. He overtook a little boy walking along manfully by himself,—a little fellow of seven years old. The two wayfarers proceeded together for several miles, conversing of various subjects. It appeared, in the course of conversation, that the little boy, whose parents are very poor, never had any pocket-money. I don't believe he ever had a penny to spend in all his life. He stated that he did not care for money, nor for the good things (in a child's sense of that phrase) which might be bought with it. And parting from the little man, I could not but tip him a shilling. Every human being who will ever read this page would of course have done the same. It was his very first shilling. He tried to receive it with philosophic composure, as if he did not care a bit about it. But he tried with little success. It was easy to see how different a thing a shilling had suddenly grown. The grapes had all at once sweetened.

But it is the same way everywhere. An author without popular estimation thinks he can do quite well without it: he does not care for it. "The world knows nothing of its greatest men"; nor, let us add, of its best. Yet popular favor proves very pleasant, when it comes

at last. So a barrister without briefs does not want them or value them, till they come. So with the school-boy who does not care for prizes; so with the student at college whose prize essays fail, through the incompetence of the judges. So (I fear) with the very intellectual preacher who would rather have his church empty than full, and who (at present) thinks that only the stupid and blinded are likely to attend a church where all the seats are occupied. I have known clever young fellows, more than two or three, who at a very early age had outgrown all ambition; men who had in them the makings of great things, but by free choice took to a quiet and unnoted life; men whose university standing had been unrivalled, but who instead of aiming at like eminence afterwards, took to gardening, to evergreens and grass and trees; to contented walks through winter fields; to preaching to fifty rustic laborers; to reading black-letter books in chambers at the Temple, instead of trying for the Great Seal; quite happy, and quite sincere in thinking and saying they did not care for more eminent places. But at length, perhaps, success and eminence come, and they are very glad and pleased. Their views of these things are quite changed. They see that they can be more useful than they are. They feel that there was a good deal of indolent self-indulgence in the life they had been leading; that there is more in this life than to practise a refined Epicureanism, — at least while strength and spirits suffice for more. The day may come, when these shall be worn out, and then the old thing will again be pleasant.

Let us hear the sum of the whole matter. If there

be anything in this world which is in its nature agreeable to average humanity, yet which you think sour, the likelihood is, that, if you got it, it would grow sweet. You cannot finally turn out nature. Though you may mow it down very tightly, it will grow again, as grass does in the like contingency. And if there be in you evil and unworthy tendencies, which by God's grace you have resolved to extirpate, you must keep a constant eye upon them. You must knock them on the head not once for all, but daily and hourly.

There are things, perhaps, which you know you would like so much, yet which are so unattainable, that you will not allow yourself to think of them. *That* way lies your safety. If you allowed yourself to dwell upon them, and upon their pleasures and advantages, you would grow discontented with what you have. So, though you cannot help sometimes casting a hasty glance at the cluster of grapes, hanging high, which you would like, but which you will never have, yet don't look long at it. Don't sit down and contemplate it for a good while from various points of view, and think how much you would like it. *That* will only make you unhappy. And if you have known this world long, then you know this about it, that the thing you would like best is just the last you are ever likely to get. But of this I shall say no more. I said something like it once before, and got a shower of long letters controverting it.

If a young fellow fails in his profession, and then say he did not want to succeed, let us believe him. He is entitled to this. We do him, in most cases, no more than justice. The grapes have indeed grown sour, and it is a kind appointment of Providence that it is so.

But if success should come yet, you will find them sweeten again surprisingly.

In writing upon this subject, I have been led to think of many things, and to think of many old acquaintances. Not very cheerfully did the writer trace out the first page, still less so the last. How sadly short has many a one, of whom we expected great things, fallen of those expectations! Is there one of the clever boys and thoughtful lads that has done as much as we looked for? Not one.

The great thing, of course, that resigns one to this, and to anything else, is the firm belief that God orders all. "IT HAD PLEASED GOD to form poor Ned, A thing of idiot mind," wrote Southey. There the matter is settled. We have not a word more to say. "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth: BECAUSE THOU DIDST IT!"

We have all smiled at the fable of Æsop, of which the writer has given you the accurate version, and smiled at many manifestations we have seen in life showing its truth, and showing us how human nature, age after age, abides the self-same thing. I believe it is one of the most beneficent arrangements of God's providential government, that the grapes we cannot reach grow sour. But for *that*, this would be a world of turned heads and broken hearts. Who has got the purple clusters he in his childhood thought to get? Yet who (if a sensible mortal) cares? You were to have been a laurelled hero, — you are in fact a half-pay captain, glad to be made adjutant of a militia regiment. You were to have

been Lord Chancellor of Great Britain,— you are, in fact, parish minister of Drumsleekie, with a smoky manse, and heritors who oppose the augmentation of your living. You were to have lived in a grand castle, possibly built of alternate blocks of gold and silver,— you live, in fact, in a plain house in a street, and find it hard enough to pay the Christmas bills. And you were to have been buried, at last, in Westminster Abbey,— while in fact you won't. But the beauty has faded off the things never to be attained, and the humble grapes you could reach have sweetened; and you are content. Yet there are grapes which, if submitted to your close inspection, would seem so sweet that in comparison with them those you have would seem very insipid; so you may be glad you will never see those grapes too near nor too long.





## CHAPTER V.

### CONCERNING THE ESTIMATE OF HUMAN BEINGS.

**T**HE other day, talking with my friend Smith, I incidentally said something which implied that a certain individual, who may be denoted as Mr. X, was a distinguished and influential man. "Nonsense!" was Smith's prompt reply. "I saw Mr. X," continued Smith, "at a public meeting yesterday. He is a gorilla,—a yahoo. He is a dirty and ugly party. I heard him make a speech. He has a horribly vulgar accent, and an awkward, cubbish manner. In short, he is not a gentleman, nor the least like one!"

And having said this, my friend Smith thought he had finally disposed of X.

But I replied, "I grant all that. All you have said about X is true. But still I say he is a distinguished and influential man, a very able man,—almost a great man."

Smith was not convinced. He departed. I fear I have gone down in his estimation. I have not seen him since. Perhaps he does not want to see me. I don't care.

But my friend Smith's observations have made me think a good deal of a tendency which is in human nature. It is very natural, if we find a man grossly deficient in something about which we are able to judge, — and perhaps in the thing about which we are able best to judge, — to conclude that he must be all bad. In the judgment of many, it is quite enough to condemn a man, to show that he is a low fellow, with an extremely vulgar accent. We forget how much good may go with these evil things ; good more than enough to outweigh all these and more. There is great difficulty in bringing men heartily to admit the great principle which may be expressed in the familiar words, — **FOR BETTER, FOR WORSE.** There is great difficulty in bringing men really to see that excellent qualities may coexist with grave faults ; and that a man, with very glaring defects, may have so many great and good qualities, as serve to make him a good and eminent man, upon the balance of the whole account. Though you can show that A owes a hundred thousand pounds, this does not certainly show that A is a poor man. Possibly A may possess five hundred thousand pounds, and so the balance may be greatly in his favor.

We all need to be reminded of this. It is very plain, but it is just very plain things that most of us practically forget. There are many folk who instantly, on discovering that A owes the hundred thousand pounds, proceed to declare him a bankrupt without further inquiry. Possibly the debt A owes is constantly and strongly pressed on your attention, while it costs some investigation to be assured of the large capital he possesses. There is one debt in particular which, if we find owed by any man, it

is hard to prevent ourselves declaring him a bankrupt without more investigation. Great vulgarity will commonly stamp a man in the estimation of refined people, whatever his merits may be. *That* is a thing not to be got over. If a man be deficient by *that* hundred thousand pounds, all the gold of Ophir will (in the judgment of many) leave him poor. Once in my youth, I beheld an eminent preacher of a certain small Christian sect. I knew he was an eloquent orator, and that he was greatly and justly esteemed by the members of his own little communion. I never heard him speak, and never beheld him save on that one occasion. But, sitting near him at a certain public meeting, I judged, from obvious indications, that he never had brushed his nails in his life. I remember well how disgusted I was, and how hastily I rushed to the conclusion that there was no good about him at all. Those territorial and immemorial nails hid from my youthful eyes all his excellent qualities. Of course, this was because I was very foolish and inexperienced. Men with worse defects may be great and good upon the whole. Or, to return to my analogy, no matter how great a man's debts may be, you must not conclude he is poor till you ascertain what his assets are. These may be so great as to leave him a rich man, though he owes a hundred thousand pounds.

The principle which I desire to enforce is briefly this, — that men must be taken *for better, for worse*. There may be great drawbacks about a thing, and yet the thing may be good. Many people think, in a confused sort of way, that if you can mention several serious objections to taking a certain course, this shows you should not take that course. Not at all. Look to the other side of the

account. Possibly there are twice as many and twice as weighty objections to your not taking that course. There are things about your friend Smith that you don't like. They worry you. They point to a conclusion which might be expressed in the following proposition : —

SMITH IS BAD.

But if you desire to arrive at a just and sound estimate of Smith, your course will be to think of other things about Smith, which speak in a different strain. There are things about Smith you cannot help liking and respecting him for. And these point to a conclusion which a man of a comprehensive mind and of considerable knowledge of the language might express as follows : —

SMITH IS GOOD.

And having before you the things which may be said *pro* and *con*, it will be your duty first to count them, and then to weigh them. Counting alone will not suffice. For there may be six things which tell against Smith, and only three in his favor ; and yet the three may be justly entitled to be held as outweighing the six. For instance, the six things counting against Smith may be these : —

1. He has a red nose.
2. He carries an extremely baggy cotton umbrella.
3. He wears a shocking bad hat.
4. When you make any statement whatever in his hearing, he immediately begins to prove, by argument, that your statement cannot possibly be true.
5. He says *tremenduous* when he means *tremendous* ; and talks of a *prizenter* when he means a *precentor*.

6. He is constantly saying, "How very curious!" also, "Goodness gracious!"

Whereas the three things making in Smith's favor may be these:—

1. He has the kindest of hearts.
2. He has the clearest of heads.
3. He is truth and honor impersonate.

Now, if the account stand thus, the balance is unquestionably in Smith's favor. And it is so with everything else as well as with Smith. When you change to a new and better house, it is not all gain. It is gain on the whole; but there may be some respects in which the old house was better than the new. And when you are getting on in life, it is not all going forward. In some respects it may be going back. It is an advance, on the whole, when the attorney-general becomes chancellor; yet there were pleasant things about the other way too, which the chancellor misses. It is, to most men, a gain on the whole to leave a beautiful rectory for a bishop's palace; yet the change has its disadvantages too, and some pleasant things are lost. When Bishop Poore, who founded Salisbury Cathedral in the thirteenth century, left his magnificent church amid its sweet English scenery, to be bishop of the bleak northern diocese of Durham, he must have felt he was sacrificing a great deal. Yet to be Bishop of Durham in those days was to be a Prince of the Church, with a Prince's revenue; and so Bishop Poore was, on the whole, content to go. I daresay in the thirteen years he lived at Durham before he died, he often wondered whether he had not done wrong.

You will find men who are good classical scholars

ready to think it extinguishes a man wholly to show that he is grossly ignorant of Latin and Greek. It is to be granted, no doubt, that as a classical training is an essential part of a liberal education, the lack of it is a symptomatic thing, like a man dropping his h's. He must be a vulgar man who talks about his Ouse and his Hoaks. And even so, to write about *rem quomodo rem*, as an eminent divine has done, raises awful suspicions. So it is with *macte estote puer*. Still, we may build too much on such things. By a careful study of English models, a man may come to have a certain measure of classical taste and sensibility, though he could not construe a chance page of Æschylus or Thucydides, or even an ode of Horace. Yet you will never prevent many scholars from sometimes throwing in such a man's face his lack of Latin and Greek, as though that utterly wiped him out. I cannot but confess, indeed, that there is no single fact which goes more fatally to the question, whether a man can claim to be a really educated person, than the manifest want of scholarship; all I say is, that too much may be made of even this. You know that a false quantity in a Latin quotation in a speech in Parliament can never be quite got over. It stamps the unfortunate individual who makes it. He may have many excellent qualities, many things of much more substantial worth than the power of writing alcaics ever so fluently, yet the suspicion of the want of the education of a gentleman will brand him. Yet Paley was a great man, though, when he went to Cambridge to take his degree of Doctor of Divinity, in the *Concio ad Clerum* he preached on that occasion, he pronounced *profūgus, profūgus*. A shower of epigrams followed

Many a man, incomparably inferior to Paley on the whole, felt his superiority to Paley in the one matter of scholarship. Here was a joint in the great man's armor, at which it was easy to stick in a pin. Lockhart, too, was a very fair scholar, though you read at Abbotsford, above the great dog's grave, certain lines which he wrote :—

“ Madae marmorea dormis sub imagine, Mada,  
Ad januam Domini. Sit tibi terra levis ! ”

You will find it difficult, if you possess a fair acquaintance with the literature of your own country, to suppress some little feelings of contempt for a man whose place in life should be warrant that he is an educated man, yet who is blankly ignorant of the worthy books in even his own language. Yet you may find highly respectable folk in that condition of ignorance ; — medical men in large practice ; country attorneys, growing yearly in wealth as their clients are growing poorer ; clergymen, very diligent as parish priests, and not unversed in theology, if versed in little else. I have heard of a highly respectable divine, of no small standing as a preacher, who never had heard of the *Spectator* (I mean, of course, Steele and Addison's *Spectator*), at a period very near the close of his life. And certain of his neighbors, who willingly laughed at that good man's ignorance, were but one degree ahead of him in literary information. They knew the *Spectator*, but they had never heard of Mr. Ruskin nor of Lord Macaulay. Still, they could do the work which it was their business to do, very reputably. And *that* is the great thing after all.

The truth is, that the tendency in a good scholar to despise a man devoid of scholarship, and the tendency in a well-read man to despise one who has read little or nothing besides the newspapers, is just a more dignified development of that impulse which is in all human beings to think A or B very ignorant, if A or B be unacquainted with things which the human beings first named know well. I have heard a gardener say, with no small contempt, of a certain eminent scholar, "Ah, *he* knows nothing; *he* does not know the difference between an arbutus and a juniper." Possibly you have heard a sailor say of some indefinite person, "*He* knows nothing; *he* does not know the foretop from the bin-nacle." I have heard an architect say of a certain man, to whom he had shown a certain noble church, "Why, the fellow did not know the chancel from the transept." And although the architect, being an educated man, did not add that the fellow knew nothing, *that* was certainly vaguely suggested by what he said. A musician tells you, as something which finally disposes of a fellow-creature, that he does not know the difference between a fugue and a madrigal. I remember somewhat despising a distinguished classical professor, who read out a passage of Milton to be turned into heroic Latin verse. One line was, —

"Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue";

which the eminent man made an Alexandrine, by pronouncing fugue in two syllables, as FEWGEW. In fact, if you find a man decidedly below you in any one thing, if it were only in the knowledge how to pronounce fugue, you feel a strong impulse to despise him on the

whole, and to judge that he stands below you altogether.

Probably the most common error in the estimate of human beings, is one already named ; it is, to think meanly of a man if you find him plainly not a gentleman. And I have present to my mind now a case which we have all probably witnessed ; namely, a set of empty-headed puppies, of distinguished aspect and languid address, imperfectly able to spell the English language, and incapable of anything but the emptiest badinage in the respect of conversation, yet expressing their supreme contempt for a truly good man, who may have shown himself ignorant of the usages of society. You remember how Brummell mentioned it as a fact quite sufficient to extinguish a man, that he was "a person who would send his plate twice for soup." The judgment entertained by Brummell, or by any one like Brummell, is really not worth a moment's consideration. I think of the difficulty which good and sensible people feel, in believing the existence of sterling merit along with offensive ignorance and vulgarity. Yet a man whom no one could mistake for a gentleman may have great ability, great eloquence in his own way, great influence with the people, great weight even with cultivated folk. I am not going to indicate localities or mention names, though I very easily could. No doubt, it is irritating to meet a member of the House of Commons, and to find him a vulgar vaporor. Yet, with all that, he may be a very fit man to be in Parliament ; and he may have considerable authority there, when he sticks to matters he can understand. And if refined and scholarly folk think to set such a one aside, by mentioning

that he cannot read Thucydides, they will find themselves mistaken.

It is to many a very bitter pill to swallow, a very disagreeable thing to make up one's mind to, yet a thing to which the logic of facts compels every wise man to make up his mind, that in these days men whose features, manners, accent, entire ways of thinking and speaking, testify to their extreme vulgarity, have yet great influence with large masses of mankind. And it is quite vain for cultivated folk to think to ignore such. Men grossly ignorant of history, of literature, of the classics, men who never brushed their nails, men who don't know when to wear a dress-coat and when a frock, may gain great popularity and standing with a great part of the population of Great Britain. Their vulgarity may form a high recommendation to the people with whom they are popular. It would be easy to point out places where anything like refinement or cultivation would be a positive hindrance to a man. Let not blocks be cut with razors. Let not coals be carried in gilded chariots. Rougher means will be more serviceable; and if people of great cultivation say, "A set of vulgar fellows, not worth thinking of"; and refuse to see the work such men are doing, and to counteract it where its effects are evil; those cultivated people will some day regret it. I occasionally see a periodical publication, containing the portraits of men who are esteemed eminent by a certain class of human beings. Most of those men are extremely ugly, and all of them extremely vulgar-looking. The natural impulse is to throw the coarse effigies aside, and to judge that such persons can do but little, either for good or ill. But if you inquire,

you will find they are doing a great work, and wielding a great influence with a very large section of the population ; the work and influence being, in my judgment, of the most mischievous and perilous character.

Then a truth very much to be remembered is, that the fact of a man's doing something conspicuously and extremely ill is no proof whatsoever that he is a stupid man. To many people it appears as if it were such a proof, simply because their ideas are so ill-defined. If a clergyman ride on horseback very badly, he had much better not do so in the presence of his humbler parishioners. The esteem in which they hold his sermons will be sensibly diminished by the recollection of having seen him roll ignominiously out of the saddle, and into the ditch. Still, in severe logic, it must be apparent that if the sermons be good in themselves, the bad horsemanship touches them not at all. It comes merely to this, — that if you take a man off his proper ground, he may make a very poor appearance ; while on his proper ground, he would make a very good one. A swan is extremely graceful in the water ; the same animal is extremely awkward on land. I have thought of a swan clumsily waddling along on legs that cannot support its weight, when I have witnessed a great scholar trying to make a speech on a platform, and speaking miserably ill. The great scholar had left his own element, where he was graceful and at ease ; he had come to another, which did not by any means suit him. And while he floundered and stammered through his wretched little speech, I have beheld fluent empty-pates grinning with joy at the badness of his appearance. They had got the great scholar to race with them ; they in their

own element, and he out of his. They had got him into a duel, giving them the choice of weapons; and having beat him (as logicians say), *secundum quid*, they plainly thought they had beat him *simpliciter*. You may have been amused at the artifices by which men, not good at anything but very fluent speaking, try to induce people, infinitely superior to them in every respect save that one, to make fools of themselves by miserable attempts at that one thing they could not do. The fluent speakers thought, in fact, to tempt the swan out of the water. The swan, if wise, will decline to come out of the water.

I have beheld a famous anatomist carving a goose. He did it very ill. And the faith of the assembled company in his knowledge of anatomy was manifestly shaken. You may have seen a great and solemn philosopher seeking to make himself agreeable to a knot of pretty young girls in a drawing-room. The great philosopher failed in his anxious endeavors, while a brainless cornet succeeded to perfection. Yet though the cornet eclipsed the philosopher in this one respect, it would be unjust to say that, on the whole, the cornet was the philosopher's superior. I have beheld a pious and amiable man playing at croquet. He played frightfully ill. He made himself an object of universal derision; and he brought all his good qualities into grave suspicion, in the estimation of the gay young people with whom he played. Yes, let me recur to my great principle,—no clergyman should ever hazard his general usefulness by doing anything whatsoever signally ill in the presence of his parishioners. If he have not a good horse, and do not ride well, let him not ride at all.

And if, living in Scotland, he be a curler ; or, living in England, join in the sports of his people ; though it be not desirable that he should display pre-eminent skill or agility, he ought to be a good player, — above the average.

It is an interesting thing to see how habitually, in this world, excellence in one respect is balanced by inferiority in another ; how needful it is, if you desire to form a fair judgment, to take men for better, for worse. I have oftentimes beheld the ecclesiastics of a certain renowned country assembled in their great council to legislate on church affairs. And, sitting mute on back benches, never dreaming of opening their lips, — pictures of helplessness and sheepishness, — I have beheld the best preachers of that renowned country : I am not going to mention their names. Meanwhile, sitting in prominent places, speaking frequently and lengthily, speaking in one or two cases with great pith and eloquence, I have beheld other preachers, whose power of emptying the pews of whatever church they might serve had been established beyond question by repeated trials. Yet, by tacit consent, these dreary orators were admitted as the church's legislators ; and, in many cases, not unjustly. There is a grander church, in a larger country, in which the like balance of faculties may be perceived to exist. The greater clergymen of that church are entitled *bishops*. Now, by the public at large, the bishops are regarded in the broad light of the chief men of the church ; that is, the greatest and most distinguished men. Next, the thing as regards which the general public can best judge of a clergyman is his preaching. The general public, therefore, regard

the best preachers as the most eminent clergymen. But the qualities which go to make a good bishop are quite different from those which go to make a great preacher. Prudence, administrative tact, kindness, wide sympathies, are desirable in a bishop. None of these things can be brought to the simple test of the goodness of a man's sermon. Indeed, the fiery qualities which go to make a great preacher do positively unfit a man for being a bishop. From all this comes an unhappy antagonism between the general way of thinking as to who should be bishops, and the way in which the people who select bishops think. And the general public is often scandalized by hearing that this man and the other, whom they never heard of, or whom they know to be a very dull preacher, is made a bishop; while this or that man, who charms and edifies them by his admirable sermons, is passed over. For the tendency is inveterate with ill-cultivated folk, to think that if a man be very good at anything he must be very good at everything. And with uneducated folk, the disposition is almost ineradicable, to conclude that if you are very ignorant on some subject they know, you know nothing; and that if you do very ill something as to which they can judge, you can do nothing at all well. Pitt said of Lord Nelson, that the great admiral was the greatest fool he ever knew, when on shore. A less wise man than Pitt, judging Nelson a very great fool on shore, would have hurried to the conclusion that Nelson was a fool everywhere and altogether. And Nelson himself showed his wisdom, when informed of what Pitt had said. "Quite true," said Nelson; "but I should soon prove Pitt a fool if I had him on board a ship." It

may, indeed, be esteemed as certain that Pitt's strong common-sense would not have failed him, even at sea ; but when he was rolling about in deadly sea-sickness, and testifying twenty times in an hour his ignorance of nautical affairs, it may be esteemed as equally certain that the sailors would have regarded him as a fool.

I have heard vulgar, self-sufficient people in a country parish relate with great delight instances of absence of mind and of lack of ordinary sense, on the part of a good old clergyman of great theological learning, who was for many years the incumbent of that parish. A thoughtful person would be interested in remarking instances in which an able and learned man proved himself little better than a baby. But it was not for the psychological interest that those people related their wretched little bits of ill-set gossip. It was for the purpose of conveying, by innuendo, that there was no good about that simple old man at all ; that he was, in fact, a fool *simpliciter*. But if you, learned reader, had taken that old man on his own ground, you would have discovered that he was anything but a fool. "What's the use of all your learning," his vulgar and ignorant wife was wont to say to him, "if you don't know how to ride on horseback, and how turnips should be sown after wheat?"

You may remember an interesting instance, in the *Life of George Stephenson*, of two great men supplementing each the other's defects. George Stephenson was arguing a scientific point with a fluent talker who knew very little about the matter ; but though Stephenson's knowledge of the subject was great, and his opinions sound, he was thoroughly reduced to silence. He

had no command of language or argument. He had a good case, but he did not know how to conduct it. But all this happened at a country-house where Sir William Follett was likewise staying. Follett saw that Stephenson was right, and he was impatient of the triumph of the fluent talker. Follett, of course, had magnificent powers of argument, but he had no knowledge whatever of the matter under discussion. But, privately getting hold of Stephenson, Follett got Stephenson to coach him up in the facts of the case. Next day, the great advocate led the conversation once more to the disputed question; and now Stephenson's knowledge and Follett's logic combined smashed the fluent talker of yesterday to atoms.

Themistocles, every one knows, could not fiddle, but he could make a little city a big one. Yet the people who distinctly saw he could not fiddle were many, while those who discerned his competence in the other direction were few. So, it is not unlikely that many people despised him for his bad fiddling, failing to remark that it was not his vocation to fiddle. Goldsmith wrote *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Good-natured Man*; yet he felt indignant at the admiration bestowed by a company of his acquaintances upon the agility of a monkey; and, starting up in anger and impatience, exclaimed, "I could do all that myself." I have heard of a very great logician and divine, who was dissatisfied that a trained gymnast should excel him in feats of strength, and who insisted on doing the gymnast's feats himself; and, strange to say, he actually did them. Wise men would not have thought the less of him though he had failed; but it is certain that many aver-

age people thought the more of him because he succeeded.

There are single acts which may justly be held as symptomatic of a man's whole nature; for, though done in a short time, they are the manifestation of ways of thinking and feeling which have lasted through a long time. To have written two or three malignant anonymous letters may be regarded as branding a man finally. To have only once tried to stab a man in the back may justly raise some suspicion of a man's candor and honesty ever after. You know, my reader, that if A poisons only one fellow creature, the laws of our country esteem that single deed as so symptomatic of A's whole character, that they found upon it the general conclusion that A is not a safe member of society; and so, with all but universal approval, they hang A. Still the doing of one or two very malicious and dishonorable actions may not indicate that a man is wholly dishonorable and malicious. These may be no more than an outburst of the bad which is in every man, cleared off thus, as electricity is taken out of the atmosphere by a good thunder-storm. I am not sure what I ought, in fairness, to think of a certain individual, describing himself as a clergyman of the Church of England, who has formed an unfavorable opinion of the compositions of the present writer, and who, every now and then, sends me an anonymous letter. It is, indeed, a curious question, how a human being can deliberately sit down and spend a good deal of time in writing eight rather close pages of anonymous matter of an unfriendly, not to say abusive character, and then send it off to a man who is a

total stranger. What are we to think of this individual? Are we to think favorably of him as a clergyman and as a gentleman? He has sent me a good many letters; and I shall give you some extracts from the last. For the sake of argument, let it be said that my name is Jones. I am a clergyman of the Established Church in a certain county. But my correspondent plainly thinks it a strong point to call me a Dissenter, which he does several times in each of his letters. Of course, he knows that I am not a Dissenter; but this mode of address seems to please him. I give you the passages from his last letter *verbatim*, only substituting Jones for another name, of no interest to anybody:—

REV. JONES (Dissenting Preacher):—

I have read your *Sermons* from *curiosity*. They exhibit your invincible conceit, like all your other works. Your notion as to the resurrection of the *old body* is utterly *exploded*, except amongst such divines as Dr. Cumming (who is *not* eminent, as you assert), and similar riff-raff.

There is now-a-days no Sabbath. The Scotch, who talk of a "Sabbath," are fools and ignorant fanatics. I am glad to see that *you*, Jones, were well castigated by a London paper for lending your name to a hateful crusade of certain fanatics in Edinburgh (including the odious Guthrie), against opening the *parks* to the people on Sunday. I intend to visit Edinburgh or Glasgow some *Sunday*, and to walk about, *as a clergyman*, between the services, with some little ostentation, in order to show my contempt of the local custom. Let any

low Scotch Presbyterian lay hands on me at his peril! Ah, Jones, you evidently dare not say your soul is your own in Scotland!

Neither Caird nor Cumming are men of first-rate ability. Cumming is a mere dunce, not even *literate*. How *can* you talk of understanding the works of Mr. Maurice? Of course not: you are too low-minded and narrow-souled! But do not dare to disparage such exalted merit. Say you are a fool, and blind, and we may excuse you.

You are clearly unable to appreciate excellence of any kind. Your assertion, that the doctrines of *the* Church, *our* Church, are *Calvinistic*, is a *false* one. *Calvinism* is now confined to illiterate tinkers, Dissenters, Puritans, and low Scotch Presbyterians.

Your constant use of the phrase, "My friends," in your sermons, is bad and affected. We are not your "friends"; and you care nothing for your hearers, except to gain their applause!

I remain, Sir Jones, with no *very great* respect,  
Your obedient servant,

P. A.

P. S. — Poor A. K. H. B. Why not A. S. S.!

Now, my reader, how shall we estimate the man that wrote this? Can he be a gentleman? Can he be a clergyman? I have received from him a good many letters of the same kind, which I have destroyed, or I might have culled from them still more remarkable flowers of rhetoric. In a recent letter he drew a very unfavorable comparison between the present writer and the author of *Friends in Council*. In that unfavorable

comparison I heartily concur ; but it may be satisfactory to Mr. P. A. to know that immediately after receiving his letter I was conversing with the author of *Friends in Council*, and that I read his letter to my revered friend. And I do not think Mr. P. A. would have been gratified if he had heard the opinion which the author of *Friends in Council* expressed of P. A. upon the strength of that one letter. Let us do P. A. justice. For a long time he sent his anonymous letters unpaid, and each of them cost me twopence. For some time past he has paid his postages. Now this is an improvement. The next step in advance which remains for P. A. is to cease wholly from writing anonymous letters.

Now to conclude : —

There is great difficulty in estimating human beings ; that is, in *placing* them (in the racing sense) in your own mind. And the difficulty comes of this, that you have to take a conjunct view of a man's deservings and ill-deservings ; the man's merit is the resultant of all his qualities, good and bad. In a race the comparison is brought to the single point of speed, — or, more accurately speaking, to the test, which horse shall, on a given day, pass the winning-post first. Every one understands the issue ; and the prize goes on just the one consideration. Great confusion and difficulty would arise if other issues were brought in ; as for instance, if a man were permitted to say to the owner of the winner, "You have passed the post first, but then my horse has the longest tail, and, upon the strength of that fact, I claim the cup." Yet, in placing human beings (mentally) for the race of life, the case is just so. You are

making up your mind, "Is this man eminent or obscure? is he deserving or not? is he good or bad?" But there is no one issue to which you can rightly bring his merits. He may exhibit extraordinary skill and ability in doing some one thing; but a host of little disturbing circumstances may come to perplex your judgment. Mr. Green was a good scholar and a clever fellow; yet I have heard Mr. Brown say, "Green! ah, he's a beast! Do you know, he told me he always studies without shoes and stockings!" And then there is a difficulty in saying what importance ought to be attached to those disturbing causes, as well as whether they exist or not. One man thinks a long tail a great beauty, another attaches no consequence to a long tail. One man concludes that Mr. Green is a beast because he studies without shoes or stockings; another holds *that* as an indifferent circumstance, not affecting his estimate of Green. I fear we can come to no more satisfactory conclusion than this, — that of Green, and of each human being, there are likely to be just as many different estimates as there are people who will take the trouble of forming an estimate of them at all.

You will remark, I have been speaking of estimates, honestly formed and honestly expressed. No doubt we often hear and often read estimates of men, which estimates have been plainly disturbed by other forces. No wise man will attach much weight to the estimate of a successful man, which is expressed by a not very magnanimous man whom he has beaten. If A sends an article to a magazine, and has it rejected, he is not a competent judge of the merit of the articles which appear in that number in which he wished his to be. You would not

ask for a fair estimate of Miss Y's singing from a young lady who tries to sing as well and fails. You would not expect a very reliable estimate of a young barrister, getting into great practice, from poor Mr. Briefless, mortified at his own ill-success. You would not look for a very flattering estimate of Mr. Melvill or Bishop Wilberforce from a preacher who esteems himself as a great man, but who somehow gets only empty pews and bare walls to hear him preach. Sometimes, in such estimates, there are real envy and malice, as shown by intentional misrepresentation and mere abuse. More frequently, we willingly believe, there is no intention to estimate unfairly; the bias against the man is strong, but it is not designed. A writer cut off from the staff of a periodical, though really an honest man, has been known to attack another writer retained on that staff. Let me say that, in such a case a very high-minded man would decline to express publicly any estimate, being aware that he could not help being somewhat biassed.

Let this be a rule:—

If we think highly of one who has beaten us, let us say out our estimate warmly and heartily.

If we think ill of one who has beaten us, let us keep our estimate to ourselves. It is probably unjust; and even if it be a just estimate, few men of experience will think it so.





## CHAPTER VI.

### REMEMBRANCE.

**S**HALL I, because I have seen the subject which has been simmering in my mind for several past days treated beautifully by another hand, resolve not to touch that subject, and to let my thoughts about it go? No, I will not.

It was a little disheartening, no doubt, when I looked yesterday at a certain magazine, to find what I had designed to say said far better by somebody else. But then Dean Alford said it in graceful and touching verse: I aimed no higher than at homely prose.

Sitting, my friend, by the evening fireside,—sitting in your easy chair, at rest, and looking at the warm light on the rosy face of your little boy or girl, sitting on the rug by you,—do you ever wonder what kind of remembrance these little ones will have of you, if God spares them to grow old? Look into the years to come: think of that smooth face, lined and roughened; that curly hair, gray; that expression, now so bright and happy, grown careworn and sad, and you long in your grave. Of course, your son will not have quite forgot you. He

will sometimes think and speak of his father who is gone. What kind of remembrance will he have of you? Probably very dim and vague.

You know for yourself, that when you look at your little boy in the light of the fire, who is now a good deal bigger than in the days when he first was able to put a soft hand in yours and to walk by your side, you have but an indistinct remembrance of what he used to be then. Knowing how much you would come to value the remembrance of those days, you have done what you could to perpetuate it. As you turn over the leaves of your diary, you find recorded with care many of that little man's wonderful sayings; though, being well aware that these are infinitely more interesting to you than to other people, you have sufficient sense to keep them to yourself. There are those of your fellow-creatures to whom you would just as soon think of speaking about these things as you would think of speaking about them to a jackass. And you have aided your memory by yearly photographs, thankful that such invaluable memorials are now possible, and lamenting bitterly that they came so late. Yet, with all this help, and though the years are very few, your remembrance of the first summer that your little boy was able to run about on the grass in the green light of leaves, and to go with you to the stable-yard and look with admiration at the horse, and with alarm at the pig voraciously devouring its breakfast, is far less vivid and distinct than you would wish it to be. Taught by experience, you have striven with the effacing power of time; yet assuredly not with entire success. Yes, your little boy of three years old has faded somewhat

from your memory ; and you may discern in all this the way in which you will gradually fade from his. Never forgotten, if you have been the parent you ought to be, you will be remembered vaguely. And you think to yourself, in the restful evening, looking at the rosy face, Now, when he has grown old, how will he remember me ? I shall have been gone for many a day and year ; all my work, all my cares and troubles, will be over ; all those little things will be past and forgot, which went to make up my life, and about which nobody quite knew but myself. The table at which I write, the inkstand, all my little arrangements, will be swept aside. That little man will have come a long, long way since he saw me last. How will he think of me ? Will he sometimes recall my voice, and the stories I told, and the races I used to run ? Will he sometimes say to a stranger, "That's his picture, not very like him" ; will he sometimes think to himself, "There is the corner where he used to sit ; I wonder where his chair is now ?"

Cowper, writing at the age of fifty-eight, says of his mother : "She died when I had completed my sixth year, yet I remember her well. I remember too a multitude of maternal tendernesses which I received from her, and which have endeared her memory to me beyond expression." For fifty-two years the over-sensitive poet had come on his earthly pilgrimage since the little boy of six last saw his mother's face. Of course, at that age, he could understand very little of what is meant by death ; and very little of that great truth, which Gray tells us he discovered for himself, and which very few people learn till they find it by experi-

ence, that in this world a human being never can have more than one mother. Yet we can think of the poor little man, finding daily that no one cared for him now as he used to be cared for, finding that the kindest face he could remember was now seen no more. And doubtless there was a vague, overwhelming sorrow at his heart, which lay there unexpressed for half a century, till his mother's picture sent him by a relative touched the fount of feeling, and inspired the words we all know:—

"I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day;  
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;  
And, turning from my nursery window, drew  
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!

But was it such?—It was. Where thou art gone,  
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.  
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,  
The parting word shall pass my lips no more!"

Nobody likes the idea of being quite forgot. Yet sensible people have to make up their mind to it. And you do not care so much about being forgotten by those beyond your own family circle. But you shrink from the thought that your children may never sit down alone, and, in a kindly way, think for a little of you after you are dead. And all the little details and interests which now make up your habitude of life seem so real, that there is a certain difficulty in bringing it home to one that they are all to go completely out, leaving no trace behind. Of course they must. Our little ways, my friend, will pass from this earth; and you and I will be like the brave men who lived before Agamemnon. A clergyman who is doing his duty diligently does not

like to think that when he goes he will be so soon forgotten in his old parish and his old church. Bigger folk, no doubt, have the same feeling. A certain great man has been entirely successful in carrying out his purpose; which was, he said, to leave something so written that men should not easily let it die. But that which is nearest us touches us most. We sympathize most readily with little men. Perhaps you preached yesterday in your own church to a large congregation of Christian people. Perhaps they were very silent and attentive. Perhaps the music was very beautiful, and its heartiness touched your heart. The service was soon over; it may have seemed long to some. Then the great tide of life that had filled the church ebbed away, and left it to its week-day loneliness. The like happens each Sunday. And many years hence, after you are dead, some old people will say, Mr. Smith was minister of this parish for so many years. That is all. And looking back for even five or ten years, a common Sunday's service is as undistinguished in remembrance as a green leaf on a great beech-tree now in June, or as a single flake in a thick fall of snow.

Probably you have seen a picture by Mr. Noel Paton, called *The Silver Cord Loosed*. It is one of the most beautiful and touching of the pictures of that great painter. I saw it the day before yesterday, not for the first or second time. People came into the place where it was exhibited, talking and laughing; but as they stood before that canvas, a hush fell on all. On a couch, there is a female figure lying dead. Death is unmistakably there, but only in its beauty; and beyond, through a great window, there is a glorious sunset sky.

"Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw herself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." Seated by the bed, there is a mourner, with hidden face, in his first overwhelming grief. Looking at that picture in former days, I had thought how "at evening time there shall be light," but looking at it now, with the subject of this essay in my mind, I thought how that man, so crushed meanwhile, if the first grief do not kill him (and the greatest grief rarely kills the man of sound physical frame), would get over it, and after some years would find it hard to revive the feelings and thoughts of this day. People in actual modern life are not attired in the picturesque fashion of the mourner in Mr. Noel Paton's picture, but it is because many can from their own experience tell what a human being in like circumstances would be feeling that this detail of the picture is so touching. And the saddest thing about it is not the present grief, it is the fact that the grief will so certainly fade and go. And no human power can prevent it. "The low beginnings of content" will force themselves into conscious existence, even in the heart that is most unwilling to recognize them. You will chide yourself that you are able so soon to get over that which you once fancied would darken all your after days. And all your efforts will not bring back the first sorrow, nor recall the thoughts and the atmosphere of that time. When you were a little boy, and a little brother pinched your arm so that a red mark was left, you hastened down-stairs to make your complaint to the proper authority. On your way down, fast as you went, you perceived that the red mark was fading out, and

becoming invisible. And did you not secretly give the place another pinch to keep up the color till the injury should be exhibited? Well, there are mourners who do just the like. I think I can see some traces of *that* in *In Memoriam*. In sorrow that the wound is healing, you are ready to tear it open afresh. And by observing anniversaries, by going to places surrounded by sad associations, some human beings strive to keep up their feelings to the sensitive point of former days. But it will not do. The surface, often spurred, gets indurated; sensation leaves it, and after a while, you might as well think to excite sensation in a piece of India rubber by pricking it with a pin, as think to waken any real feeling in the heart which has indeed met a terrible wound, but whose wound is cicatrized. All this is very sad to think of. Indeed, I confess to thinking it the very sorrest point about the average human being. Great grief may leave us, but it should not leave us the men we were. There are people in whose faces I always look with wonder, thinking of what they have come through, and of how little trace it has left. I have gone into a certain room, where everything recalled vividly to me one who was dead. Furniture, books, pictures, piano, how plainly they brought back the face of one far away! But the regular inmates of the house had no such feeling; had it not, at least, in any painful degree. No doubt, they had felt it for a while, and outgrown it; whereas to me it came fresh. And after a time it went from me too.

You know how we linger on the words and looks of the dead after they are gone. It is our sorrowful protest against the power of Time, which we know is taking


these things from us. We try to bring back the features and the tones; and we are angry with ourselves that we cannot do so more clearly. "Such a day," we think, "we saw them last: so they looked: and such words they said." We do *that* about people for whom we did not especially care while they lived: a certain consecration is breathed about them now. But how much more as to those who did not need this to endear them! You ought to know the lines of a true and beautiful poet about his little brother who died:—

"And when at last he was borne afar  
From the world's weary strife,  
How oft in thought did we again  
Live o'er his little life!

"His every look, his every word,  
His very voice's tone,  
Came back to us like things whose worth  
Is only prized when gone!"

I wish I could tell Mr. Hedderwick how many scores of times I repeated to myself that most touching poem in which these verses stand. But I know (for human nature is always the same) that, when the poet grew to middle age and more, those tones and looks that came so vividly back in the first days of bereavement would grow indistinct and faint. And now, when he sits by the fire at evening, or when he goes out for a solitary walk, and tries to recall his little brother's face, he will grieve to feel that it seems misty and far away.

"I cannot see the features right,  
When on the gloom I strive to paint  
The face I knew; the hues are faint,  
And mix with hollow masks of night."



And you will remember how Mr. Hawthorne, with his sharp discernment of the subtle phenomena of the mind, speaking in the name of one who recalled the form and aspect of a beautiful woman not seen for years, says something like this: When I shut my eyes, I see her yet, but a little wanner than when I saw her in fact.

Yes; and as time goes on, a great deal wanner. I have remarked that even when the outlines remain in our remembrance, the colors fade away.

Thus true is it, that as for the long absent and the long dead, their remembrance fails. Their faces, and the tones of their voice, grow dim. And sometimes we have all thought what a great thing it would be to be able at will to bring all these back with the vividness of reality. What a great thing it would be if we could keep them on with us, clearly and vividly as we had them at the first! When your young sister died, oh how distinctly you could hear, for many days, some chance sentence as spoken by her gentle voice! When your little child was taken, how plainly you could feel, for a while, the fat little cheek laid against your own, as it was for the last time! But there is no precious possession we have which wears out so fast as the remembrance of those who are gone. There never was but one case where that was not so. Let us remember it as we are told of it in the never-failing Record: there are not many kindlier words, even there:—

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

So you see in *that* case the dear remembrance would never wear out but with life. The Blessed Spirit would bring back the words, the tones, the looks, of the Blessed Redeemer, as long as those lived who had heard and seen Him. He was to do other things, still more important; but you will probably feel what a wonderfully kindly and encouraging view it gives us of that Divine Person, to think of Him as doing all that. And while we have often to grieve that our best feelings and impulses die away so fast, think how the Apostles, everywhere, through all their after years, would have recalled to them when needful *all things* that the Saviour had said to them; and how He said those things; and how He looked as He said them. *They* had not to wait for seasons when the old time came over them; when through a rift in the cloud, as it were, they discerned for a minute the face they used to know; and heard the voice again, like distant bells borne in upon the breeze. No: the look was always on St. Peter, that brought him back from his miserable wander; and St. John could recall the words of that parting discourse so accurately, after fifty years.

The poet Motherwell begins a little poem with this verse:—

“ When I beneath the cold red earth am sleeping,  
Life's fever o'er,  
Will there for me be any bright eye weeping  
That I'm no more?  
Will there be any heart sad memory keeping  
Of heretofore? ”

Now that is a pretty verse, but to my taste it seems tainted with sentimentalism. No man really in earnest could have written these lines. And I feel not the slightest respect for the desire to have “bright eyes

weeping" for you, or to have some vague indefinite "heart" remembering you. Mr. Augustus Moddle, or any empty-headed lackadaisical lad, writing morbid verses in imitation of Byron, could do that kind of thing. The man whose desire of remembrance takes the shape of a wish to have some pretty girl crying for him (which is the thing aimed at in the mention of the "bright eye weeping") is on precisely the same level, in regard to taste and sense, with the silly, conceited block-head who struts about in some place of fashionable resort, and fancies all the young women are looking at him. Why should people with whom you have nothing to do weep for you after you are dead, any more than look at you or think of you while you are living? But it is a very different feeling, and an infinitely more respectable one, that dwells with the man who has outgrown silly sentimentalism, yet who looks at those whom he holds dearest; at those whose stay he is, and who make up his great interest in life; at those whom *he* will remember, and never forget, no matter where he may go in God's universe; and who thinks, Now, when the impassable river runs between,—when I am an old remembrance, unseen for many years,—and when they are surrounded by the interests of their after life, and daily see many faces but never mine; how will they think of me? Do not forget me, my little children whom I loved so much, when I shall go from you. I do not wish you (a wise, good man might say) to vex yourselves, little things; I do not wish you to be gloomy or sad; but sometimes think of your father and mother when they are far away. You may be sure that, wherever they are, they will not be forgetting you.



## CHAPTER VII.

### ON THE FOREST HILL: WITH SOME THOUGHTS TOUCHING DREAM-LIFE.



WHY is it that that purple hill will not get out of my mind to-night? I am sure it is not that I cared for it so much when I could see it as often as I pleased. I suppose, my reader, that you know the painful vividness with which distant scenes and times will sometimes come back unbidden and unwished. No one can tell why. And now, at 11.25 P. M., when I have gone up to my room far away from home, and ought to go to bed, that hill will not go away. There is no use in trying. And nothing can be more certain than that if I went to bed now, I should toss about in a fever till 4 or 5 A. M. Well, as a smart gallop takes the nonsense out of an aged horse which has shown an unwonted friskness, there is something which will quiet this present writer's pulse, and it shall be tried. Come out, you writing-case; come forth, the foolscap, the ink-bottle, the little quill that has written many pages. And now you may come back again before the mind's eye, purple hill, not seen for years.

I shut my eyes, which if opened would behold many



things not needful to be noted, and then the scene arises. In actual fact, the writer is surrounded by the usual furniture of a bedroom in a great railway hotel in a certain ancient city; and occasional thundering sounds, and awful piercing screeches, speak of arriving and departing trains somewhat too near. I have walked round the city upon the wall; and reaching a certain spot I sat down in the summer twilight, and looked for a long time at the old cathedral, which is not gray with age; on the contrary, it is red, as though there lingered about its crumbling stones the sunsets of seven hundred summers. The day was, as we learn from Bishop Blomfield's *Life*, wherein to be the chief minister of that noble church was esteemed as a very poor preferment. And this estimation is justified by the statement that the annual revenue of the bishop was not so very many hundred pounds. But who shall calculate the money value of the privilege of living in this quaint old city, whose streets carry you back for centuries; and of worshipping, as often as you please, under that sublime roof; of breathing the moral atmosphere of the ancient place; and of looking from its walls upon those blue hills and over those rich plains? Surely one might here live a peaceful life of worship, thought, and study, amid Gothic walls and carved oak and church music. And if any ordinary man should declare that he could not be content with all this, just let me get him by the ears. Would n't I shake him!

But all this is a deviation. And if there is anything on which the writer prides himself, it is the severity of his logic. You will not find in his pages those desultory and wandering passages which attract the

unthinking to the works of Archbishop Whately and Mr. John Stuart Mill. And from this brief excursion he returns to the severe order of thought which is natural to him.

I shut my eyes, as has been already remarked. The railway hotel, the thundering trains, and the yelling engines vanish, and the old scene arises. It is a bright autumn afternoon. The air is very still. The sun is very warm, and makes the swept cornfields golden. The trees are crimson and brown, and crisped leaves rustle beneath your foot. It is a long valley, with hills on either side, and a river flowing down it. A path winds by the river side, through the fields; and there, in front, is the purple hill. An Englishman would think it pretty high. It is more than twelve hundred feet in height. The upper part of it is covered with heather. It rises like a great pyramid, closing in the valley. There are two or three little farm-houses half-way up it. Above these it is solitary and still.

I wonder, this evening, being so far away, yet with painful distinctness seeing all that, whether I am there in fact as well as feeling? Would some country lad, returning late from market, discern a shadowy figure walking slowly along the path, and bawl out and run away, recognizing me?

If you believe various recent books, you will understand that when you think very intently of a place or person, it is not improbable that some misty eidolon of yourself is present to the person or at the place. I cannot say that I think this fact well authenticated.

I walk on, not in the summer night, but in the au-

tumn afternoon. I want to climb the hill, as I have done so often in departed days. So I lay aside the pen, and bend down my head on my hands.

I have been there, if ever I was in my life. It is not every day one can sit in a very hard easy-chair, and take such a walk, nearly two hundred miles off.

Through the long grass, with a dry rustle under one's feet, by the river's side; up through a little wood of firs, till the highway is gained; over a one-arched bridge, that spans a little rocky gorge, where a stream, smaller than the river, tumbles over a shelf of rock, making a noisy waterfall, now white as country snow that has lain but a night; up a steep and rough road, with birches on either hand, and a brook flowing down on one side, that brawls in rainy weather, but only murmurs on the still autumn day; up and up till the hedges give place to walls of rude stones, built without mortar; and till rough slopes of heather spread away on either side; up and up till the path ceases, and you sit down on a great boulder of granite in the lonely bosom of the hill: through all that I have been. A long way below this, but a longer way above the wooded valley, which you now see in its whole extent, you may discern the smoke rising from a farm-house, screened a little by a clump of rather scraggy pines. There is a sick man there,—an aged man whom I go to see frequently. I went to the farm-house door, a black and white dog barking furiously; there a pleasant, comely, young face welcomed me. I went in and found my old friend sitting by his warm fireside, which was, indeed, a great deal too warm for any one who had been striving up

that stiff ascent. I saw his face and heard his voice, though he has been dead for years. I saw the sheep feeding on the hill around ; I heard a cart passing noisily along a road far below ; I saw the long gleam of the river, down in the valley, and the horizon of encircling hills : saw and heard all these things as really as though they had been present. Memory is certainly a most wonderful thing. It is very capricious. Sometimes it recalls things very faintly and dimly ; sometimes, with a vividness that makes one start. Can it be so long ago ! And it selects in a very arbitrary fashion what it will choose to remember. The faces and voices we would most desire to recall, it allows to fade away ; and scenes and people we did not particularly care for, it now and then sets before us with this strange vividness of force and color. I did not cherish any special regard for the old farmer ; and the walk up the hill was not a very great favorite. Yet to-night something took me by the collar and walked me up that path, and set me down beside the old man's chair.

I have come back. It has exorcised the hill, to write all this about it. I had an eerie feeling, like that which De Quincey tells he had for many nights about the Malay to whom he gave the great piece of opium. But now the hill is appeased. All these odd, inexplicable states of thought and feeling are transitory. And it is much better that they should be so. Hard work crowds them out : it is only in comparative leisure they come at all.

But we are not to suppose that only weak and fanciful persons know by experience these mental phenomena.

What may be called *Dream-life* (that is, spending some part of one's time in an imaginary world), is a thing in which some of the hardest-headed of human beings have had their share. And this little walk which the writer has had to-night in a place far away, and as upon a day that is left far behind, helps him to understand some of those singular things which are recorded of the extent to which many men have spent their time in castles in the air, and of the persistency with which they have dwelt there, to the forgetfulness of more tangible interests. If ever there was a man who was not a morbid day-dreamer, it was Sir James Mackintosh. Sir James Mackintosh was known to mankind in general as an acute metaphysician, a forcible political writer, a brilliant talker. The greatest place he ever held, to the common eye, was that of Recorder of Bombay. And he held that place just the shortest time he possibly could to earn his pension. How many men knew, looking at the homely Scotchman, what his true place in life was? Had he not told us himself, we should hardly have believed it. He was Emperor of Constantinople! And a laborious and anxious position he found it. He (mentally) promoted many of his friends to important offices of state; and his friends by their indiscretion and incompetence caused him an immense deal of trouble. Then the empire was always getting involved in the most vexatious complications, which seriously affected the emperor's sleep and general health. He always felt like a man playing a very intricate game of chess. No wonder he was sometimes very absent and distracted. You would say he might have escaped all this by resigning his crown; but he could not arrange satisfac-

torily to do that. A thoughtless person smiles at these things; but to Mackintosh they were among the most serious things of his life. A man of bread-and-butter understanding would explain it by saying that Mackintosh was cracked; but then we all know that he was not cracked. Yet in his disengaged hours, regularly as they came, was the thread of his history taken up where it had been dropped last time; and he was the emperor, laden with an emperor's cares. It was not, as with the actor Elliston, received with great applause on the stage at Drury Lane, and fancying himself a king just long enough to bestow a blessing upon the audience, till he was pulled up by a burst of laughter. Nor was it like Alexander the Great, according to Dryden, who "assumed the god" for only a very limited period. Neither was the astute philosopher's notion of an emperor the childish one. He was not emperor, to sit on a throne and receive homage and make a grand appearance on grand occasions, but to go through intricate calculations and hard work, and to undergo great anxiety.

In short, Sir James Mackintosh, being a great man, indulged in dream-life on a great scale. But commonplace human beings do it in a way that suits themselves and their moderate aspirations. The poor consumptive girl, who, on a dark December evening, is propped up with pillows, and gets you to sit beside her while she tells you how much stronger and better she feels, how by spring she will be quite well again, and how delightful the long walks will be in the summer evenings, while you know she will never see the black-thorn in blossom, nor the green leaves on the tree: she is doing just what the great metaphysician used to do. And the little

schoolboy, far away from home, a thoughtful, bullied little fellow, does it too, when he pictures out the next holiday-time, and his getting away from all this to be with those who care for him. Possibly more people than you would think make up for the dulness of their actual life in some such way. They take pleasure in fancying what they would like in their vacant hours. And unless you wish your mind to become very small and dry, you will have such hours. No matter how hard-worked you may be, they are attainable. You remember what Charles Lamb once wrote to a friend: "If you have but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them." Human beings, living even the most prosaic lives, have sometimes their enchanted palace, and live in it a great deal. Have you not sometimes, my reader, pictured out the life you would like, not in the least expecting it, or even really wishing it, any more than Mackintosh really looked to be made Emperor of Constantinople? And when you have set your heart on something happening, which is very likely not to happen, it is quite right to please yourself by picturing out the best: all the more that this is all the enjoyment of it you are likely to have. If we have all suffered a great deal of pain through the anticipation of evils which never came, we have all probably enjoyed a great deal of pleasure through the anticipation of pleasant things which were never to be. We have lived a good deal in castles which were never to be built, but in the air. When we tried for something we did not get, you remember well how we used, in vacant hours, to plan out all the mode of life, even to its minute de-

tails ; enjoying it only the more keenly through the intrusion of the fear that only in this airy fashion should we ever lead that life which we should have enjoyed so much. Of course, it is not expedient to waste in dreaming over noble plans the precious hours which might have gone far to turn our dreams into serviceable realities. It is foolish for the lad at college to spend, in thinking how proud his parents would be, and how pleased all his friends, if he were to carry off all the honors that were to be had, the time which, if devoted to hard work, might have gained at least some of those soon-forgotten laurels. It may be said here, by way of parenthesis, that one of the very last visions in which ambitious youth need indulge is the vision of being recognized as great and distinguished in the place of your birth or your early days. A prophet has no honor in his own country. I have a friend, greatly revered, who expresses an opposite opinion. He maintains, in a charming volume, that if you rise to decent eminence in life, the people who knew you as a boy will be proud of you, and will help to push you on farther. "I see, with my mind's eye," says my friend, "a statue of Dunsford, erected in Tollerporcorum." Dunsford was a native of Tollerporcorum ; and having recorded the conversation of his *Friends in Council*, would probably be thus distinguished. There are portions of this earth where the fact is just the contrary. Tollerporcorum is just the last place where certain Dunsfords I know are likely to have a statue. Dunsford's early acquaintances cannot bear the moderate success which has attended Dunsford in life ; they regard *Friends in Council* as a very poor work ; and a college acquaintance, who never

forgave Dunsford the medals he won there, now and then abuses Dunsford in the Tollerporcorum newspaper. I lately visited a certain Tollerporcorum, — an ancient town in a fair tract of country. That Tollerporcorum had its Dunsford. Dunsford started from small beginnings, but gradually rose about as high as a human being well can in a certain portion of Scandinavia. But the fashionable and intellectual thing in Tollerporcorum was to ignore Dunsford and his career altogether. Nobody cared about him or it. Dunsford sometimes went back to Tollerporcorum; and the Tollerporcorum people diligently shut their eyes to his existence. Every envious little wretch who had stuck in the mud thus avenged himself on Dunsford for having got on so far. In the latter years of his honored life, Dunsford hardly ever visited Tollerporcorum; and when the great man died, it was never proposed at Tollerporcorum to erect so much as a drinking-fountain to his memory.

Here ends the parenthesis. Take up the broken thread of thought. It is right and pleasant to gain at least the pleasure of anticipation out of happy things that are not to be. And when you see a sanguine person in a state of great enjoyment through such anticipation, you will not, unless you have in you the spirit of my old friend Mr. Snarling, try to throw a damp upon all this innocent happiness by pointing out, with great force of logic, how very little chance there is of the anticipation being realized. That is only the stronger reason for enjoying in this way that which you are not likely to enjoy in any other. There is hardly a more touching sight than the sight of a human being, old or young, happy in the anticipation of any pleasant thing

which he will never reach. With what a rosy face and what bright eyes your little boy of five years old confides to you all he is to do when he is a man! Great are the grandeur and fame in which he is to live, many are to be his horses, and numerous his dogs; but a great feature in his plan always is, how happy he is to make his father and mother. Ah! little man, before those days come your father and mother will be far away.

And a reason why a wise man, desirous to economize the enjoyment there is in this life, and to make it go as far as possible, will often quietly luxuriate in the prospect of what he secretly knows is not likely to happen, is this certain fact, that in this world the thing you would like best is the thing you are least likely to get. *That* is a fact which, as we get on through life, we come to know extremely well. Yes, if you set your heart on a thing, whoever gets it, *you* won't. You may get something else, perhaps something better, but not *that*. If you have such an enthusiasm for Gothic architecture that you sometimes think no one could enjoy it so much, if you feel that it would sensibly flavor all your life to live in a Gothic house or to worship in a Gothic church, then, though everything else about them be all you could wish, rely on it, your church and house will be Palladian. And you will often meet men whose belongings are Gothic, who tell you they are very beautiful, very uncomfortable, that the church is destroying their lungs, and the house giving them perpetual cold in their heads, and who greatly envy you. Of course, all this is gratifying, to a certain degree. It serves to make you content.

I have known a man who lived in a house which was

extremely comfortable, and extremely ugly. No one could ever say to what school of architecture, in particular, his residence was to be referred. And the country round was very ugly and bare. But, like the farmer in Virgil, in that exquisite passage in one of the *Georgics*, *regum æquabat opes animo*; he could picture out, at will, a charming English manor-house, of hospitable-looking red brick with stone dressings; oriel-windowed, steep-gabled, with great wreathed chimneys, with environing terraces, with magnificent horse-chestnuts ever blazing in the glory of June. You thought he was walking a bleak moorland road, dreary and dismal; but in truth the warm breeze was shaking the blossoms overhead, and making a chequered dancing shade on soft green turf below. And there yearly comes a certain season, when very many human beings practise on themselves a delusion something like his. I mean Christmas-time. Who ever spent the ideal Christmas? I should like very greatly to behold that person. I have never done so yet: never spent a Christmas in all my life in the ideal way. You ought to be living in a noble Gothic house, somewhere in the midland counties of England. There ought to be a large and gay party, spending the holidays there. There ought to be an exquisite old church near. There ought to be bracing frost, and cheerful snow. All hearts should seem touched and warmed by the sacred associations of the season. There should be an oaken hall, and a vast wood-fire; holly and mistletoe; and of course roast beef and plum-pudding and strong ale for every poor person near. You should be living, in short, at Bracebridge Hall, exactly as it was when Washington

Irving described it, and with all the same people. It need not be said that in fact the Christmas time and its surroundings are quite different from all this. You sit down by yourself, and try to get up the feeling of the time by reading Washington Irving and Mr. Dickens's *Christmas Carol*. The *Illustrated London News* is a great help to ordinary imaginations at that season. On the actual Christmas-day, rainy, muddy, tooth-aching, ill-tempered, you turn over the pictures in that excellent journal; and you find the ideal Christmas there. My friend Smith once told how he spent his first Christmas-day in his little country parsonage. Luckily there was snow. He provided that his servants, three in number, should have the means of a little enjoyment. He worked hard all the forenoon writing a sermon, whose subject was not the Nativity. And for an hour before dinner he walked alone, up and down a little gravelled walk with evergreens on each side, looking at the leaden sky and the solitary fields, and trying to feel as if he were at Bracebridge Hall. He tried with small success. Then, having dined in solitude on turkey and plum-pudding, he read the pleasant Christmas chapter in *Pickwick*, and tried to get up an enthusiasm about the enjoyment which, for the sake of argument, might be conceived as existing in many houses that night. Finally, he concluded that he was unsuccessfully trying to humbug himself, and ended by reading Butler's *Analogy* in a good deal of bitterness of heart.

Very early in our intelligent life, our personality begins to cut us off from those nearest us. Unless a parent have a much deeper insight and sympathy than

most parents have, he loses knowledge very early of the real inward life of his children. At first, it is like wading in shallow water; but it is not long till it shelves down into depths beyond your diving. The little thoughtful face you see every day; the little heart within you know just as much as you know the outer side of the moon. No doubt, if this be so, it is in a great measure your own fault. There are many parents to whom their children, young or old, would no more confide the things they really care for and think about than they would confide these to the first cabman at the next stand. But beyond this, the little things soon begin to have a world of their own, not known to any but themselves. You may have known young children who wearied for the hour when they might get to bed, and begin to think again; take up the history where they left it off last night. Of course, the history and the world were very different from the fact. Kings and queens, heroes and giants, elves and fairies, palaces and castles, these being oftentimes enchanted, were common there. Also clear views of the kind of life they would live when they grew up; a life in which coaches and six, suits of armor, and the like, were not unknown.

It is a mercy for some people, that circumstances keep them down. Their lot circumscribes their opportunity of making fools of themselves. My friend Smith, already named, is a clergyman. His church is a plain one. Such is his craze for Gothic architecture, that I tremble to think what would have become of him if he had chanced to attain a magnificent church dating from the eleventh century, — a church with stately ranks of shafts, echoing aisles, storied window, crusaders' statues,

rich oak carving, and monumental brasses, standing amid grand old trees. I fear he would have spent great part of his time in admiring and enjoying the structure ; in sitting on a gravestone outside and looking at it ; in walking up and down inside it, and the like. It would have been a great feature in his life. It is much safer and better that he has been spared that temptation. The grand building, of course, has fallen to somebody who does not care for it at all. In a former age, there was a barrister who would have keenly enjoyed being made a judge. Probably no man ever made a judge would have delighted so much in the little accessories of that eminent position, — the curious garb, and the varied dignity wherewith the administrators of the law are surrounded. How tremendously set up he would have been, if he could once have sentenced a man to be hanged ! The writer was present when the name of that person was suggested to an individual who could have made him what he wished to be. That individual was asked whether he might not do. That individual did not open his lips, but he shook his head slowly. from side to side several times. For thus goes on this world.

Probably most human beings, now and then, have short glimpses of cheerfulness and light-heartedness, which make them think how much more and better might be made of this life. You have seen a charming scene, bathed in a glorious sunshine, and you have thought, Now, it might always be like this. Sometimes there comes a hopefulness of spirit, in which all difficulties and perplexities vanish ; in which everything seems delightful, and all creatures good. This is the potential

of happiness in man. Of course, it is seldom reached, and never for long. Most people are more familiar with the converse case, in which everything looks dark and amiss,—the season of perplexity, despondency, depression. Probably this comes many times more frequently than the other. Let me say, my reader, that we know the reason why.

The truth is, it is not needful to our enjoyment of many things that we should fancy any connexion between ourselves and them. You read a pleasant story, and like it, without fancying yourself its hero or heroine. Never in your life, perhaps, have you spent a week in a house like Bracebridge Hall; and you are never likely to do that. Yet you enjoy the sunshiny volume; and you thank its author for many hours of quiet, thoughtful enjoyment, for which you felt the better. And, indeed, much of what is pleasing and beautiful you enjoy most when you never think of it in relation to yourself. Take the most pleasing development of human comeliness, which is doubtless in the case of young women. Let it be admitted that there are few things more pleasing and interesting to the rightly-constituted mind than the sight of sweet girlish faces and graceful girlish forms, and the tones of the pleasant voices that generally go with them. But there is no doubt earthly, that in grave middle age, you have much more real pleasure in these things than in feverish youth. Let us suppose, my reader, that you are a man in years. Those who were young girls in your day are middle-aged women now: they are past. But you look with the kindest interest on the fair young faces of another generation. A young lad is eager to commend himself to

the notice and admiration of these agreeable human beings. He is filled with bitter enmity at other lads more successful than himself in gaining their favor. His whole state of mind in the circumstances leads him into a host of absurdities: the contemplative mind sees him in the light of an ass. Now, you are beyond and above all these things. You look with pure pleasure and kindness at the fairest beings of God's creation; and you look at the fair sight and enjoy it as you look at Ben Lomond, or at the setting sun, without the faintest wish to make it your own. It is the entire absence of personal interest that makes your interest so pleasant, and so unmingled with any disagreeable feeling. I remember to have read, in a religious biography, a statement made by a very clever and good man about a certain beautiful girl, called away in early youth. "I found myself," he said, "looking at her with an interest for which I could not account." Was that unsophisticated simplicity real? Not able to account for the interest with which you look at a pleasant sight! I think it might be accounted for. Though indeed when we go to first principles, we get beyond the reach of logical explanation. In strictness, you may not be able to say why the tear comes to your eye when you look at a number of little children, and think what is before them. In strictness, you may not be able to say why it was that so many people found themselves shedding tears, on a day in Westminster Abbey, when they saw the Crown placed on the head of a certain young girl who, in after years, was destined to gain the love of most hearts in Britain as the best of Queens. Yet a great many thoughtful persons have recorded that they were affected



alike in beholding that sight. So there must have been something in the sight to awaken the emotion.

These are the things of which the writer thought in the circumstances already set out. Probably it has made you sleepy to read all this. It had the contrary effect to write it; for when the writer at length wearily sought his couch, he could not sleep at all.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### A REMINISCENCE OF THE OLD TIME : BEING SOME THOUGHTS ON GOING AWAY.

**I**AM sure you know how, as we advance in life, hours come in which we feel an impulse to sit down for a little, and try to revive an old feeling, before it dies away ; and many of our old feelings are dying away, and will ultimately die out altogether. It is partly through use, and partly because our system, physical and psychical, is growing less sensitive as we go on. We do not feel things now as we used to do. We are getting stronger, the robuster nerves of middle age do not receive the vivid impressions of earlier years, and there are faintly-flavored things which they cease to appreciate at all. We have come out from the green fields, and from the shady woodlands, and we are plodding along the beaten highway of life. It is the noon now, not perhaps without some tendency to decline towards evening ; and we look back to the dawn and to the morning, when the air was cool and fresh, and when the sky was clear. And we have grown hardened to the rougher work of the present time. We have all got lines pretty deeply drawn upon our faces, and a good many gray hairs. And if

one could see a middle-aged soul, no doubt you would see about it something analogous to being wrinkled and gray. No doubt you would likewise discern something analogous to the thickening and toughening of the skin in the case of the middle-aged hand. Neither hand nor heart feels so keenly.

There is no help for it, but still one cannot help regretting it, the way in which things lose their first fresh relish by use. We ought to be getting more enjoyment out of things than we do. A host of very small matters, which we pass without ever noticing, would afford us real and sensible pleasure if we had not grown so accustomed to them. Prince Lee Boo, as we used to read, was moved to ecstatic wonder and delight by the upright walls and the flat ceiling of an ordinary room. They were new to him. There was a young Indian chief, many years ago, who came from the Far West to London, and was for a season a lion in fashionable society. He was a manly, clever young fellow, but in his English months he never got over his unsophisticated enjoyment of the furniture of English houses. And thoughtless folk despised him, when they ought rather to have envied him, as they witnessed his delight in the contemplation of a dinner-table where he had been accustomed to see a stretched bull's hide, and of plates, knives and forks, carpets, mirrors, window-curtains, and wash-hand stands. All these great luxuries, and a thousand more, *he* appreciated at their true value; while civilized men and women, through familiarity, had arrived at contempt of them. Which was right, the civilized folk or the savage man? Is it the human being who sees least in the things around him that

ought to be proud, or is not the man rather to be envied who discerns in simple matters qualities and excellences which others do not discern? If you had so worn out your eyes by constant use that you could no longer see, *that* would be nothing to plume yourself on; you would have no right to think you had attained a position of superiority to the remainder of the human race, in whom the optic nerve still retained its sensitiveness. Yet there are people who are quite proud that their mind has had its nerves of sensation partially paralyzed, and who would like you to think that those nerves are entirely paralyzed. "I don't remark these things," they will say with an air of disdain, when you point out to them some of the little material advantages which we enjoy in this country now-a-days. They convey that they think you must be a weak-minded person because you do remark these things, because you still feel it a curious thing to leave London in the morning, and after ten hours and a half of unfatiguing travelling to reach Edinburgh in the evening; or because you still are conscious of a simple-minded wonder when you send a message five hundred miles, and get your answer back in a quarter of an hour. If there be a mortal whom I despise, it is the man who is anxious to impress you with the fact that he does not care in the least for anything. The human being who is proud because he has reached the *nil admirari* stage is just a human being who is proud because a creeping paralysis has numbed his soul.

Yet without giving in to it, and without being proud of it, you are aware that the keen relish goes from that which you grow accustomed to. I have indeed heard it

said concerning certain individuals whose supercilious and lofty air testified that some sudden rise in life had turned their head, that they lived in a state of constant surprise at finding themselves so respectable. But this statement was not true in its full extent. For after being for several years in a position for which nature never intended him, even Dr. Bumptious (before his elevation his name was Toady) must have grown to a certain measure accustomed to it. Even other people got accustomed to it. And though his incompetence for his place remained just as glaring as ever, they ceased to remark it, and came to accept it as something in the nature of things. You know, we do not perplex ourselves by inquiring every morning why there are such creatures as wasps, toads, and rattlesnakes. But if these beings were of a sudden introduced into this world for the first time, it would be different.

It is to be lamented that the very fresh and sensible enjoyment which we derive from very little things, when they are new to us, passes so completely away when they grow familiar. I remark that my fellow-creatures, who inhabit houses in this street, are very far from being duly thankful for the great privilege we possess in having a post-office at the end of it. You write your letters in the forenoon after you have completed your more serious work, and upon each envelope you stick the representation of a face which is very familiar to us all, and very dear. If you are a wise man, you post your letters for yourself; and accordingly the first thing you do daily, when you go forth to your out-door business or duty, is to proceed to that little opening which receives the expression of so much care, so much kindness, so

much worry, so much joy and sorrow, and to drop the documents in. Not many of the human beings who post letters and who receive them have any habitual sense of the supreme luxury they enjoy in that familiar institution of the post-office. Into that little opening goes your letter; a penny secures its admission, and obtains for it very distinguished consideration; and in a little while the most ingenious mechanism that has been devised by the most ingenious minds is hard at work conveying your letter, at tremendous speed, by land or sea; till next morning, unerring as the eagle upon its eyrie, it swoops down upon the precise dwelling at which you aimed it. When I say it swoops down upon a dwelling in the country, I mean to express poetically the fact that it comes jogging along in a cart drawn by a little white pony, which stops for the purposes of conversation whenever it meets anybody in the wooded lane I have in my mind. But in saying that the inhabitants of this street are not duly thankful for the post-office at the corner, I did not mean merely that they fail to understand what a blessing to Britain the system of postal communication is. Everybody, on ordinary days, fails to understand *that*. I was thinking of something else. I was thinking of the luxury of having a receiving-house so near. When I lived in the country, the post-office was five miles distant; and if you missed the chance of sending away your letters in the morning by the cart drawn by the white pony, you must wait till next day, or you must send a special messenger to the old-fashioned town of red freestone dwellings, standing by a classic river's side. Let not that town be mentioned save in complimentary terms. Let me learn by the

misfortune of another. An eminent native of the district which surrounds it, known in the world of letters, once upon a time published some remarks upon that town, disguising its pretty name in another of somewhat ludicrous sound. And when that eminent man shortly afterwards strove to persuade the inhabitants to send him to represent them in Parliament, the old offence was raked up, and it did him harm. This, however, is a digression. Let us return. When I came from the country, to live in this city, I felt it a great privilege, and something to be enjoyed freshly every time, to take my letters to the post-office, two hundred yards off. It was delightful. Not once in the day, but (if need were) half a dozen times, could you write your letter, and in three minutes have it in the post-office. There was something very fresh and enjoyable in the reflection, as you stood by the receiving-house window, Now here in these minutes I am in the same position in which half an hour's smart driving, or an hour and a quarter's steady walking, would have placed one in departed days! Wonderful! But now, after several years of the enjoyment of this privilege, the fresh wonder has worn away. The edge of enjoyment is dulled. And though I try hard, in going to the post-office, to feel what a blessing it is, I cannot feel it as I would wish. Yes, the enjoyment of the post-office is gone in great measure; even as the unutterable greenness discerned by the stranger goes from the summer trees among which you have come to feel yourself at home; even as the sound of Niagara becomes inaudible to the waiters at the Niagara Hotel; even as the bishop who was plucked at college gradually ceases to be astonished at

finding himself a bishop; even as Miss Smith, in a few weeks after she is married, no longer feels it strange to be called Mrs. Jones; even as the readers of what is with bitter irony called a *religious newspaper* lose their first bewilderment at finding a human animal writing an article filled with intentional misrepresentation, lying, and slandering, and ending the article by taking God to witness that in abusing the man he hates for his success and eminence, he is actuated by a simple regard to the Divine glory.

And thus it is, remembering how the old time and the old way fade out, that the writer has resolved to give a little space of comparative rest to reviving (as far as may be) something which used to have a strongly felt character of its own in years which are gone, and which are melting into blue distance fast. Let me seek to bring up again the atmosphere of *Going Away*, as it used to be, and to be felt. No doubt there is a certain fancifulness about moral atmospheres; not all men feel them alike; and there are robust natures which probably do not feel them at all. When a man comes to describe a house, a landscape, a mode of life, not as these are in literal fact, but as these impress himself, then we get into a realm of uncertainty and fancy. When a man ceases to say of a dwelling that it is built of red brick, that it has so many windows in front, that it is so many stories high, that it has evergreens of such kinds round it, and the like; and when the man goes on to describe the house by quite other characteristics, — saying that it is a sleepy-looking house, a dull house, a hospitable-looking house, an eerie strange-looking house, a house that makes you feel queer, — then you feel that though

the man may convey to another man, who is in sympathy with himself, a very true impression of the fact as it presents itself to him, still there are many people to whom such descriptions are really quite unintelligible; and that those who are most capable of understanding them are least likely to agree as to their truth. It is so with what I have called moral atmospheres; the pervading characteristic of a time, a scene, a way of life, a human being. Nor can it be admitted that there is anything of morbid sensitiveness in being keenly aware of these. Most people know the vague sort of sense that you have of being in a remote pastoral country, or of being in a busy town. You feel a difference in the morning whenever you awake, and before you have fully gathered up your consciousness; it pervades your very dreams. You remember periods of your life about which there was a kind of flavor; strongly felt, but indescribable to others; not to be expressed in any spoken words; Mendelssohn or Beethoven might have come near expressing it in music; and it comes back upon you in reading some passage in *In Memoriam* which has nothing to do with it, or in looking at the first yellow crocus in the cold March sunshine, or in walking along a lane with blossoming hawthorn on either hand, or in smelling the blossoms of an apple-tree. And when you look back, you feel the atmosphere surround you again with its fragrance a good deal gone, and with its colors faded. It is a misty, ghost-like image of a past life and its surroundings that steals vaguely before your mental sight; and possibly it cannot be more accurately or expressively described than by saying that the old time comes over you.

Doubtless external scenery has a great deal to do in the production of that general sense of a character pervading one's whole mode of life, which I mean by a moral atmosphere. It is especially so if you lead a lonely life, or if you have not many companions, and these not very energetic or striking. How well many men in orders remember the peculiar flavor of the time when they first began their parochial duty! Years afterwards, you go and walk up and down in the church where you preached your first sermons, and you try to awaken the feeling of that departed time. It comes back in a ghostly, unsubstantial way; sometimes it refuses to be wakened up at all. And the feeling, whatever it may be, is (to many men) very mainly flavored by the outward scene in which that time was spent. I can easily believe that there are persons on whose mood and character no appreciable impression is produced by external scenery: probably the reader knows one or two. They have usually high cheek-bones, smoke-dried complexions, and disagreeable voices; they think Mr. Tennyson a fool, and tell you that *they* cannot understand him, in a tone that conveys that in their judgment nobody can. I have known men who declared honestly that they did not think Westminster Abbey in the least a more solemn place than a red brick meeting-house with a flat ceiling, and with its inner walls chastely white-washed, or papered with a paper representing yellow marble. My acquaintance with such individuals was slight, and by mutual consent it speedily ceased. Give us the man who frankly tells you how different a man he is in this place from what he is in that, how outward nature casts its light or its shadow upon all his thinking

and feeling. What would you be, my friend, if you lived for months by a misty Shetland sea, or amid a wild Irish bogland, or in a wooden chalet at Meyringen, or on a flat French plain, with white ribbons of highway stretching across it, bordered with weary poplars; or under the shadow of castle-crowned crags upon the Rhine, or amid the bustle of a great commercial town, or in the classic air of an ancient university city, with a feast of Gothic everywhere for the eyes, and with courts of velvety turf that has been velvety turf for ages? But here I get into the region of the fanciful; and though holding very strongly a certain theory about these things, I am not going to set it out here. Yet I cannot but believe that, when you read men's written thoughts, you may readily, if you be of a sensitive nature, *feel* the surroundings amid which they were written. Turn over the volume which was written in the country by a man keenly alive to outward things and their influences, and you will be aware of a breeziness about the pages,—a fresher air seems to breathe from them, the atmosphere of that simple life and its little cares. Turn over the Best of all books: read especially the accounts of patriarchal times in Genesis: and (inspiration apart) you will feel the presence of something indefinitely more than the bare facts recorded. You will feel the fresh breeze come to you over the ocean of intervening centuries: you will know that a whole life and its interests surround you again. And there seems to me no more marked difference between fictitious stories written by men of genius and written by commonplace people than this, that the commonplace people make you aware of just the incidents they record, while the man of genius makes you

aware of a vast deal more, — of the entire atmosphere of the surrounding circumstances and concerns and life. You will understand what is meant when I remind you of the wonderful way in which the battle of Waterloo is made to surround and pervade a certain portion of the train of events recorded in that thoroughly true history, Mr. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*.

Now all that is pleasant. I mean to the writer, not necessarily to the reader. The writer has to produce a multitude of pages, which to produce is of the nature of grave work; and in them he must hold right on, and discuss his subject under no small sense of responsibility. But such pages as this are his play; and he may without rebuke turn hither and thither, and pluck the wild flowers on either side of the path. O how hard work it is to write a sermon; and, when one is in the vein, how easy it is to write an essay! And, in saying that all this is pleasant, the thing present to the author's mind was the very devious course which his train of thought has followed since the first sentence of this dissertation was written. I have a great respect for certain men, who write in a logical and scholarly way. I admire and esteem such. When I read their productions at all, I do so after breakfast, when one's wits are fully awake. But in the evening, by the fireside, when the day's work and worry are over, and there remains the precious little breathing-space, I would rather not read them. Neither do I desire here to write like them.

Going Away is my subject. Going Away and its atmosphere, as it used to be, and as it is to many people now. Going Away from home. Not Going Away for ever — not Going Away for a long time; not Going

Away under painful circumstances. Ordinary and commonplace Going Away.

And let me tell you, intrepid travellers, who think nothing of flying away to London, to Paris, to Chamonvi, to Constantinople, that Going Away for a week or two, and to a distance not exceeding a hundred miles, is a very serious thing to a quiet, stay-at-home person. A multitude of contingencies suggest themselves in its prospect; there is the vague fear of the great, terrible outside world. It is as when a little boat, that has been lying safe in some sheltered cove, puts out to sea, to face the full might of winds and waves; when a lonely human being, who for months has plodded his little round of work and care, looking at the same scenes, and conversing with the same people, musters courage to go away for a little while. There is a considerable inertia to overcome; some effort of resolution is needed. When you have lived an unvaried life for many weeks in a quiet country place, your wish is to sit still. Yet there are great advantages which belong to people who have seen little or nothing. They have so keen a sense of interest, and so lively an impression of the facts, in beholding something new. By and by they come to take it easily. You look out of the window of the railway carriage, and in reply to something said by a fellow-traveller, you say, "Ah, that's Berne, or that's Lausanne," and you return to your *Times* or your *Saturday Review*. You look forth on the left hand, as the train rounds a curve, and say, "Strasburg spire; very fine. Four hundred and fifty feet high. It does not look nearly so much from this point." Now once it was very different. It was a vivid sensation to see for the first

time some town in England, or some lake or hill in Scotland. My friend Smith told me that once, for more than six years, beginning when he was eight-and-twenty, he never had stirred ten miles from his home and his parish, save when he went in the autumn for a few weeks to the seaside; and then he went always to the same place, a journey of four hours or so. It would have done him much good — had he been able sometimes through those years which were very anxious and very trying ones — to have the benefit of a little change of scene. But he could not afford it; and in those days of depressed fortune, he had, literally, not a friend in this world, beyond the little circle of his own home. He had, indeed, some acquaintances; but they were able to understand him or sympathize with him about as much as a donkey could. But better days came, as (let us trust) they will come, through hard work and self-denial, to most men, by God's blessing; and Smith could venture on the great enterprise of a journey to London. Ah! an express train was a great thing to him; and a journey of three hundred miles an endless pilgrimage. And he told me himself (he is in his grave now, and no one who knew him will know him by what has been said of him) that it was an extraordinary feeling to look out of the carriage-window, and to think, Now Cambridge is only a few miles off, over these flats! And farther on, when the trains glided by the capital of the Fens, and the noble mass of Peterborough Cathedral loomed through the misty morning, it was a stranger object to him than St. Sophia or even the Mosque of Omar would be to you; and he thought how curious a thing it would be to live on that wide

plain, in that quiet little city, under the shadow of that magnificent pile. Probably, my friend, you have been long enough in many striking places to feel their first interest and impression go, to feel their moral atmosphere become inappreciable. You feel all *that* keenly at first; but gradually the place becomes just like anywhere else. After a while, the inner atmosphere overpowers the outer; the world within the breast gives its tone and color to the scene around you. I believe firmly, that if you want to know a place vividly and really (I mean a town of moderate extent), you ought to stay in it just a day and no more. By remaining longer, you may come to know all the churches and shops, and the like; but you will lose the pervading atmosphere and character of the whole. First impressions are always the most vivid; and I firmly believe they are in the vast majority of cases the most truthful. An observant and sensitive man, spending just a day in a town with twenty thousand inhabitants, knows what kind of place that town is far better than an ordinarily observant person who has lived in it for twenty years.

The truth is, that a little of a thing is usually far more impressive than the whole of it, or than a great deal of it. Don't you remember how, when you were a child, lying in bed in the morning, you used to watch the daylight through the shutters? And you remember how bright it looked, through the narrow line where the shutters hardly met: it was like a glowing fire. At length, the shutters were thrown back, and they let in all the day; and it was nothing so bright. Even if the morning was sunshiny, there was a sad falling off; and perhaps the morning was dull and rainy. Even

so is the glimpse of Peterborough from the passing express train, infinitely finer than the view of Peterborough to the man who lives in it all the year round. Even so has the quiet life of a cathedral city a charm to the visitor for a day, who has come from a land where cathedrals are not, which fades away to such as spend all their days in the venerable place, and come to have associations not merely of glorious architecture and sublime music, but likewise of many petty ambitions, jealousies, diplomacies, and disappointments; and, in short, of Mr. Slope and Mrs. Proudie. Yes, a little of a thing is sometimes infinitely better than the whole; and it is the little which especially has power to convey that general estimate of a pervading characteristic which we understand by perceiving the moral atmosphere. And besides this, you may have a surfeit of even the things you like best. You heartily enjoy a little country Gothic church; you linger on every detail of it; it is a pure delight. But a great cathedral is almost too much: it wearies you, it overwhelms you. You may get, through one summer day, as much enjoyment out of Sonning Church as out of York Minster. That perfection of an English parish church, with its perfect vicarage, by the beautiful Thames, is like a friend with whom you can cordially shake hands: the great minster is like a monarch to be approached on bended knee. Most people remember a case in which a thousandth part would have been far better than the whole: I mean, the Great Exhibition in that fine shed which the nation declined to buy. You would have enjoyed the sight of a little of what was gathered there; but the whole was a fearful task to get through.

I never beheld more wearied, dazed, stupefied, disgusted, and miserable countenances, than among rich and poor under that roof. I wonder whether any mortal ever really enjoyed that glare and noise and hubbub, or felt his soul expanded under the influence of that huge educational institution. Too many magazines or books, too, coming together, convert into a toil what ought to be a pleasure. You look at the mass, and you cannot help thinking what a deal you have to get through. And that thought is in all cases fatal to enjoyment. Whenever it enters the heart of a little boy, contemplating his third plate of plum-pudding, the delight implied in plum-pudding has vanished. Whenever the hearer listens to the preacher describing what he is to do in the first and second place, and so on to the fifth or sixth, the enjoyment with which most sermons are heard is sensibly diminished. And even if you be very fond of books, there is a sense of desolation in being turned loose in a library of three hundred thousand volumes. That huge array is an incubus on your spirit. There is far more sensible pleasure when you go into a friend's snug little study, and diligently survey his thousand or twelve hundred books. And you know that if a man has a drawing-room a hundred feet long, he takes pains to convert that large room into a little one, by enclosing a warm space round the fire with great screens for his evening retreat. Yes, a little is generally much better than a great deal.

A thing which precedes Going Away is packing up. And this the wise man will do for himself, the more so if he cannot afford to have any one to do it for him. There is a great pleasure in doing things for yourself.

And here is one of the compensations of poverty. You open for yourself the parcel of new books you have bought, and with your own hand you cut the leaves. A great peer, of course, could not do this, I suppose. The volumes would be prepared for his reading, and laid before him with nothing to do but to read them. Now, it ought to be understood, that the reading of a book is by no means the only use you can put it to, or the only good you can get out of it. There is the enjoyment of stripping off the massive wrappings in which the volumes travelled from the bookseller's shop, through devious ways, to the country home. There is the enjoyment of cutting the leaves, which, if you have a large ivory paper knife, is a very sensible one. There is the enjoyment of laying the volumes after their leaves are cut upon your study table, and sitting down in an arm-chair by the fireside, and calmly and thoughtfully looking at them. There is the enjoyment of considering earnestly the place where they shall be put on your shelves, and then of placing them there, and of arranging the volumes which have been turned out to make room for them. All these pleasures you have, quite apart from the act of reading the books; and all these pleasures are denied to the rich and mighty man who is too great to be allowed to do things for himself. He has only the end: we have both the end and the means which lead up to it. And the greater part of human enjoyment is the enjoyment of means, not of ends. There is as much solid satisfaction in going out and looking at your horse in his warm stable as in riding or driving him. An eminent sportsman begins a book in which he gives an account of his exploits in hunting

in a foreign country, by fondly telling how happy he was in petting up his old guns till they looked like new, and in preparing and packing ammunition in the prospect of setting off on his expedition. You can see that these tranquil and busy days of anticipation and preparation at home were at least as enjoyable as the more exciting days of actual sport which followed. Now, however much a duke might like to do all this, I suppose his nobility would oblige him to forego the satisfaction.

If you have a wife and children (and for the purposes of this essay I suppose you to have both), the multitude of trunks and packing-cases in which their possessions are bestowed in the prospect of going away, are sought out and packed apart from any exertion or superintendence on your part. Your share consists in writing addresses for them, and in counting up the twenty-three things that are assembled in the lobby before they are loaded on cart, cab, or carriage. I have remarked it as a curious thing, that when a man with his wife and two or three children and three or four servants go to the seaside in autumn, the articles of luggage invariably amount to twenty-three. And it has ever been to me a strange and perplexing thought, how so many trunks and boxes are needed, and how, through various changes by land and sea, they get safely to their destination. There are few positions which awaken more gratitude and satisfaction in the average human being, than (having arrived at the seaside place) to see the twenty-three things safe upon the little pier, after the roaring steamer which brought them has departed, and the little crowd has dispersed ; when, amid the still-

ness, suddenly become audible, you tell the keeper of the pier to send your baggage to the dwelling which is to be your temporary home. A position even more gratifying is as follows: when, returning to town, your holiday over, you succeed, by the aid of two liberally-tipped porters, in recovering all your effects from the luggage-van of the railway-train, amid an awful crowd and confusion on the platform, and accumulating them into a heap, for whose conveyance you would assuredly be called to pay extra but for the judicious largesse already alluded to; then in seeing them piled in and upon three cabs, in which you slowly wend your way to your door; and finally, in the lobby, whence they originally started, counting up your twenty-three things once more. Yes, there is much pleasure attendant on the possession and conveyance of luggage; a pleasure mingled with pain, indeed, like most of our pleasures; a pleasure dashed with anxiety and clouded with confusion, yet ultimately passing into a sense of delightful rest and relief, as you count up the twenty-three things and find them all right, which you had hardly dared to hope they would ever be.

So much having been said concerning the general luggage of the family, let us return to the thought of your own personal packing. You pack your own portmanteau, arranging things in that order which long usage has led you to esteem as the best. And if you be a clergyman, you always introduce into that receptacle your sermon-case with two or three sermons. You do this, if you be a wise man, though there should not appear the faintest chance of your having to preach anywhere,—having learned by experience how often and

how unexpectedly such chances occur. And then, when your portmanteau is finally strapped up and ready to go, you look at it with a moralizing glance, and think how little a thing it looks to hold such a great deal. It is like a general principle, including a host of individual cases. It is like a bold assertion, which you accept without thinking of all it implies. And in a short time that compendium of things immediately needful will be one among a score like it in the luggage-van. Thus, the philosopher may reflect, is every man's own concern the most interesting to himself, because every man knows best what is involved in his own concern.

There are many associations about the battered old leathern object, and it is sad to remark that it is wearing out. It is to many people a sensible trial to throw aside anything they have had for a long time. And this thing especially, which has faithfully kept so many things you intrusted to it, and which has gone with you to so many places, seems to cast a silent appealing look at you when you think it is getting so shabby that you must throw it aside. Some day you and I, my friend, will be like an old portmanteau; and we shall be pushed out of the way to make room for something fresh. Probably it is worldly wisdom to treat trunks and men like that single-minded person, Mr. Uppish, who steadfastly cuts his old friends as he gradually gets into a superior social stratum. Doubtless he has his reward.

It is invariably on Monday morning that certain human beings Go Away, in the grave and formal manner which has been spoken of. I mean, with an entire family, and with the twenty-three trunks, many of them

very large ones. Not unfrequently a perambulator is present, also a nursery crib. And going at that especial period of the week, there is a certain thing inevitably associated with Going Away. That thing is the periodical called the *Saturday Review*. It comes every Monday morning; and you cut the leaves after breakfast and glance over it, but you put off the reading of it till the evening. But on those travelling days this paper is associated with the forenoon. Breakfast is a hasty meal that day. The heavy baggage, if you dwell in the country, has gone away early in a cart, — the railway station is of course five miles off. And then, just a quarter of an hour after the period you had named to your man-servant, round comes the phaeton which can hold so much. It comes at the very moment you really desired to have it, — for knowing that your servant will always be exactly a quarter of an hour too late, you always order it just a quarter of an hour before the time you really want it. Phaeton of chocolate hue, picked out with red and white; horse of the sixteen hands and an inch, jet black of color, well-bred in blood, and gentle of nature, where are you both to-night? Through the purple moorlands, through the rich cornfields, along the shady lanes, up the High-street of the little town, we have gone together; but the day came at length when you had to go one way and I another; and we have each gone through a good deal of hard work doubtless since then. Pleasant it is, driving home from the town in the winter afternoon, and reaching your door when it has grown pretty dark; pleasant is the flood of mellow light that issues forth when your door is opened; pleasant is it to witness the unloading of the vast amount and

variety of things which, in various receptacles, that far from ponderous equipage could convey; pleasant to witness the pile that accumulates on the topmost step before your door; pleasant to behold the bundle of books and magazines from the reading-club; pleasanter to see the less frequent parcel of those which you can call your own; pleasant to see the manifold brown-paper parcels enter the house, which seems to be such a devouring monster, craving ceaseless fresh supply. All this while the night is falling fast, and the great trees look down, ghost-like, upon the little bustle underneath them. Then phaeton and horse depart; and in a little you go round to the stable-yard, and find your faithful steed, now dry and warm, in his snug stall, eagerly eating, yet bearing in a kindly way a few pats on the neck and a few pulls of the ears. And your faithful man-servant is quite sure to have some wonderful intelligence to convey to you, picked up in town that afternoon. In the country, you have not merely the enjoyment of rich summer scenery, of warm sunsets, and green leaves shining golden; there is a peculiar pleasure known to the thorough country man in the most wintry aspects of nature. The bleak trees and sky outside, the moan of the rising wind presaging a wild night, and the brawl of the swollen brook that runs hard by, all make one value the warmth and light and comfort within doors about forty times as much as you could value these simple blessings in a great city, where they seem quite natural, and matters of course. Of course, a great man would not care for these things, and would despise the small human being that does care for them. Let the great man take his own way, and let the small human being be allowed to *follow his in peace.*

This, however, is a deviation to an evening on which you come home ; whereas our proper subject is a morning on which you go away from home. The phaeton has come to the door ; many little things go in ; finally the passengers take their seats, and the thick rugs are tucked in over their knees ; then you take the reins (for you drive yourself), and you wind away outward till you enter the highway. The roads are smooth and firm, and for all the heavy load behind him, the black horse trots briskly away. Have I not beheld a human being, his wife, two children, a man-servant, and a woman-servant, steadily skimming along at a respectable nine miles an hour, with but one living creature for all the means of locomotion ? And the living creature was shining and plump, and unmistakably happy. The five miles are overcome, and you enter the court-yard of your little railway station. There in a heap, cunningly placed on the platform where the luggage-van may be expected to rest when the train stops, is your luggage. The cart has been faithful : there are the twenty-three things. You have driven the last mile or two under a certain fear lest you might be too late ; and that fear will quicken an unsophisticated country pulse. But you have ten minutes to spare. There are no people but your own party to divide the attention of the solitary porter. At length, a mile off, along the river bank, you discern the sinuous train : in a little the tremendously energetic locomotive passes by you, and the train is at rest. You happily find a compartment which is empty, and there you swiftly bestow your living charge ; and having done this you hasten to witness the safe embarkation of the twenty-three trunks and packages.

All this must be done rapidly, and of course you take much more trouble than a more experienced traveller would. And when at length you hurriedly climb into your place, you sink down in your seat, and feel a delicious sense of quiet. The morning has been one of worry, after all. But now you are all right for the next four hours. And that is a long look forward. You keenly appreciate this blink of entire rest. Your unaccustomed nerves have been stretched by that fear of being late; then there was the hurry of getting the children into their carriage, and seeing after the twenty-three things; and now comes a reaction. For a few miles it is enough just to sit still, and look at the faces beside you and opposite you, and especially to watch the wonder imprinted on the two round little faces looking out of the window. First, looking out on either side there is a deep gorge; great trees; rocks on one side, and on the other side a river. By and by the golden gleam of ripe cornfields in the sunshine on either hand lightens up all faces. And now, forth from its bag comes the *Saturday Review*; and you read it luxuriously, with frequent pauses and lookings out between. Do the keen, sharp, brilliant men who write those trenchant paragraphs ever think of the calm enjoyment they are providing for simple minds? Although you do not care in the least about the subject discussed, there is a keen pleasure in remarking the skill and pith and felicity with which the writer discusses it. You feel a certain satisfaction in thinking that every Monday since that periodical started on its career, you have read it. It is a sort of intellectual thing to do. You reflect with pleasure on the statement made on oath by a witness in

a famous trial. He described a certain person as "a sensible and intelligent man who took in the *Times*." What proof, then, of scholarly likings, and of power to appreciate what not everybody can appreciate, should be esteemed as furnished by the fact that a man pays for and reads the *Saturday Review*?

Now here, my reader, we have reached the very article of GOING AWAY. Many are the thoughts through which we approached it: here it is at last. Behold the human being, about the first day of August, seated in a corner of a railway carriage, whose cushions are luxurious, and whose general effect is of blue cloth within, and varnished teak without. Opposite the human being sits his wife. Pervading the carriage you may behold two children. And carefully tending them, and seeking vainly to keep them quiet, you may (in very many cases, for such excellent persons are happily not uncommon) discern a certain nurse, who is as a member of that little family circle; more than a trusted and valued servant, even a faithful friend. That is how human beings Go Away. That is the kind of picture which rises in the writer's mind, and in the mind of very many people in a like station in this life, when looking back over not many years.

There is a certain cumbrous enjoyment in all Going Away, bearing with you all these *impedimenta*; even when you are going merely for a Christmas week or the like. But the great Going Away is at the beginning of your autumn holidays. And thinking of this, I feel the prospect change from country to town: I think how the human being, wearied out by many months of hard work amid city bustle and pressure,

leaves these behind ; how the little children shut up their school-books, and their tired instructors are off for their turn of much-needed recreation ; how the churches are emptied, and the streets deserted ; how the congregation, assembled in one place on the last Sunday of July, is before the next one scattered far and wide, like the fragments of a bursting bombshell. But it is not now, in this mid-term of work, that one can recall the feelings of commencing holiday-time. Meanwhile, you are out of sympathy with it ; and every good thing is beautiful in its time.

Was it worth while thus to revive things so long past ? It has been pleasant for the writer ; and a hundred things not recorded here have been awakened in the retrospect. And when these pages meet the right people's eye, they may serve to recall simple modes of being and doing which are melting fast away. For the experience of ordinary mortals is remarkably uniform ; and most of the people you know are in many respects extremely like yourself. Now let us cease and sit down and think. There is indeed a temptation to go on. One would rather not stop in the middle of a page ; I mean a manuscript page ; and it is almost too much for human nature to know that we may add a few sentences more, and they will not be cut off. And there are positions too much for human nature. A sense of power and authority, as a general rule, is more than the average man can bear. Not long since I beheld, in the superhuman dignity of a policeman, something which deeply impressed this on my mind. The kitchen chimney of this dwelling caught fire. It is contrary to municipal law to

let your kitchen chimney catch fire, and very properly so ; so there was a fine to be paid. On a certain day I was told there was a policeman in the kitchen, who desired an interview. I proceeded thither and found him there. No language can convey an idea of the stern and unyielding severity of that eminent man's demeanor. He seemed to think I would probably plead with him to let Justice turn from her rigid course ; and he sought by his whole bearing to convey that any such pleading would be futile ; and that, whatever might be said, the half-crown must be paid, to be applied to public purposes. When I entered his presence, he sternly asked me what was my name. Of course he knew my name just as well as I did myself ; but there was something in the requirement fitted to make me feel my humble position before him. And having received the information, he made a note of it in a little book ; and, conveying that serious consequences would follow, he departed. A similar manifestation may be found in the case of magistrates in small authority. I have heard of such an individual who dispensed justice from a seedy little bench, with an awful state. He sat upon that bench all alone ; and no matter of the smallest importance ever came before him. Yet when expressing his opinion, he never failed to state that THE COURT thought so and so. A vague impression of dignity thus was made to surround the workings of the individual mind. It once befell, that certain youthful students, in a certain university, had a strife with the police ; and being captured by the strong arm of the law, were conveyed before such a magistrate. Sitting upon the judgment seat, he sternly upbraided the youths for their

discreditable behaviour; adding, that it gave him special sorrow to witness such lawless violence in the case of individuals who were receiving a university eddication. He did not know, that unhappy magistrate, that there stood at his bar one whose audacious heart quailed not in his presence. "Stop," exclaimed that unutterably irreverent youth, interrupting the stern magistrate; "let me entreat you to pronounce the word properly; it is not EDDICATION, it is EDUCATION." And the magistrate's dignity suddenly collapseed, like a blown-up bladder when you insert a penknife. This incident is recorded to have happened at Timbuctoo, in the last century. I have no doubt the story is not true. Hardly any stories are true. Yet I have often heard it related. And like the legend of *The Ass and the Archbishop*, which is utterly without foundation, you feel that it ought to be true.





## CHAPTER IX.

### CONCERNING OLD ENEMIES.

**I**T may be assumed as certain, that most readers of this page have on some occasion climbed a high hill. It may be esteemed as probable, that when half-way up, they felt out of breath and tired. It is extremely likely that, having come to some inviting spot, they sat down and rested for a little, before passing on to the summit. Now, my reader, if you have done all that, I feel assured that you must have remarked as a fact that, though when you sit down you cease to make progress, you do not go back. You do not lose the ground already gained. But if you ever think at all, even though it should be as little as possible, you must have discerned the vexatious truth that in respect of another and more important kind of progress, unless you keep going on, you begin to go back. You struggle, in a moral sense, up the steep slope; and you sit down at the top, thinking to yourself, "Now *that* is overcome." But after resting for a while you look round; and lo! insensibly you have been sliding down, and you are back again at the foot of the eminence you climbed with so much pain and toil.

There are certain enemies with which every worthy human being has to fight, as regards which you will feel, as you go on, that this principle holds especially true; the principle that if you do not keep going forward, you will begin to lose ground and go backward. It is not enough to knock these enemies on the head for once. In your inexperienced days you will do this; and then, seeing that they look quite dead, you will fancy they will never trouble you any more. But you will find out, to your painful cost, that those enemies of yours and mine must be knocked at the head repeatedly. One knocking, though the severest, will not suffice. They keep always reviving, and struggling to their feet again; a little weak at first through the battering you gave them, but in a very short time as vigorous and mischievous as ever. The Frenchman, imperfectly acquainted with the force of English words, and eager that extremest vengeance should be wreaked on certain human foes, cried aloud, "KILL THEM VERY OFTEN"! And *that*, my friend, as regards the worst enemies we have got, is precisely what you and I must do.

If we are possessed of common sense to even a limited amount, we must know quite well who are our worst enemies. Not Miss Limejuice, who tells lies to make you appear a conceited, silly, and ignorant person. Nor Mr. Snarling, who diligently strives to prevent your reaching something you would like, because (as he says) the disappointment will do you good. Not the human curs that gnarr at your heels when you attain some conspicuous success or distinction; which probably you worked hard for, and waited long for. Not these. "A man's foes," by special eminence and distinction,

are even nearer him than "they of his own house : " a man's worst enemies are they of his own heart and soul. The enemies that do you most harm, and probably that cause you most suffering, are tendencies and feelings in yourself. If all within the citadel were right, if the troop of thoughts and affections *there* were orderly and well-disposed and well-guided, we should be very independent of the enemies outside. Outside temptation can never make a man do wrong till something inside takes it by the hand, and fraternizes with it, and sides with it. The bad impulse within must walk up arm in arm with the bad impulse from without, and introduce it to the will, before the bad impulse from without, however powerful it may be, can make man or woman go astray from right. All this, however, may be taken for granted. What I wish to impress on the reader is this : that in fighting with these worst enemies, it is not enough for once to cut them down ; smash them, bray them in a mortar. If you were fighting with a Chinese invader, and if you were to send a rifle-bullet through his head, or in any other way to extinguish his life, you would feel that he was done with. You would have no more trouble from *that* quarter. But once shoot or slash the ugly beast which is called Envy, or Self-Conceit, or Unworthy Ambition, or Hasty Speaking, or general Foolishness, and you need not plume yourself that you will not be troubled any more with him. Let us call the beast by the general name of BESETTING SIN ; and let us recognize the fact, that though you never willingly give it a moment's quarter, though you smash in its head (in a moral sense) with a big stone, though you kick it (in a moral sense) till it seems to be lying quite

lifeless, in a little while it will be up again as strong as ever. And the only way to keep it down is to knock it on the skull afresh every time it begins to lift up its ugly face. Or, to go back to my first figure: you have climbed, by a hard effort, up to a certain moral elevation. You have reached a position, climbing up the great ascent that leads towards God, at which you feel resigned to God's will, and kindly disposed to all your fellow-creatures, even to such as have done you a bad turn already, and will not fail to do the like again. You also feel as if your heart were not set, as it once used to be, upon worldly aims and ends; but as if you were really day by day working towards something quite different and a great deal higher. You feel humble, patient, charitable. You sit down there, on that moral elevation, satisfied with yourself, and thinking to yourself, Now, I am a humble, contented, kindly, Christian human being; and I am so for life. And let it be said thankfully, if you keep always on the alert, always watching against any retrogression, always with a stone ready to knock any old enemy on the head, always looking and seeking for a strength beyond your own, — you may remain all *that* for life. But if you grow lazy and careless, in a very little while you will have glided a long way down the hill again. You will be back at your old evil ways. You will be eager to get on, and as set on this world as if this world were all, you will find yourself hitting hard the man who has hit you, envying and detracting from the man who has surpassed you, and all the other bad things. Or if you do not retrograde so far as *that*, if you pull yourself up before the old bad impulse within you comes

to actual bad deeds, still you will know that the old bad impulse within you is stirring, and that, by God's help, you must give it another stab.

Now this is disheartening. When, by making a great effort, very painful and very long, you have put such a bad impulse down, it is very natural to think that it will never vex you any more. The dragon has been trampled under the horse's feet, its head has been cut off; surely you are done with it. You have ruled your spirit into being right and good; into being magnanimous, kindly, humble. And then you fancied you might go ahead to something more advanced; you had got over the *Pons Asinorum* in the earnest moral work of life. You have extirpated the wolves from your England, and now you may go on to destroy the moles. The wolves are all lying dead, each stabbed to the heart. You honestly believe that you had got beyond them, and that whatever new enemies may assail you, the old ones, at least, are done with finally. But the wolves get up again. The old enemies revive.

I have sometimes wondered whether those men who have done much to help you and me in the putting down of our worst enemies, have truly and finally slain those enemies as far as concerns themselves. Is the man, in reading whose pages I feel I am subjected to a healthful influence, that puts down the unworthy parts of my nature, and that makes me feel more kindly, magnanimous, hopeful, and earnest than when left to myself, — is that man, I wonder, always as good himself as for the time he makes me? Or can it be true that the man who seems not merely to have knocked on the head the lower impulses of his own nature, but to have done good

to you and me, my friend, by helping to kill those impulses within us, has still to be fighting away with beasts, like St. Paul at Ephesus; still to be lamenting, on many days, that the ugly faces of suspicion, jealousy, disposition to retaliate when assailed, and the like, keep wakening up and flying at him again? I fear it is so. I doubt whether the human being lives in whom evil, however long and patiently trodden down, does not sometimes erect its crest, and hiss, and need to be trodden down again. Vain thoughts and fancies, long extinguished, will waken up; unworthy tendencies will give a push now and then. And especially I believe it is a great delusion to fancy that a man who writes in a healthy and kindly strain is what he counsels. If he be an honest and earnest man I believe that he is striving after that which he counsels, and that he is aiming at the spirit and temper which he sets out. I think I can generally make out what are a moral or religious writer's besetting sins, by remarking what are the virtues he chiefly magnifies. He is struggling after those virtues, struggling to break away from the corresponding errors and failings. If you find a man who in all he writes is scrupulously fair and temperate, it is probable that he is a very excitable and prejudiced person, but that he knows it, and honestly strives against it. An author who always expresses himself with remarkable calmness is probably by nature a ferocious and savage man. But you may see in the way in which he restricts himself in the matter of adjectives, and in which he excludes the superlative degree, that he is making a determined effort to put down his besetting sin. And probably he fancies, quite honestly, that he

has finally knocked that enemy on the head. The truth no doubt is, that it is because the enemy is still alive, and occasionally barking and biting, that it is kept so well in check. There is just enough of the old beast surviving to compel attention to it: the attention which consists in keeping a foot always on its head, and in occasionally giving it a vehement whack. The most eminent good qualities in human beings are generally formed by diligent putting down of the corresponding evil qualities. It was a stutterer who became the greatest ancient orator. It was a man who still bore on his satyr face the indications of his old satyr nature who became the best of heathens. And as with Socrates and Demosthenes, it has been with many more. If a man writes always very judiciously, rely upon it he has a strong tendency to foolishness; but he is keeping it tight in check. If a man writes always very kindly and charitably, depend upon it he is fighting to the death a tendency to bitterness and uncharitableness.

A faithful and earnest preacher, resolved to say no more than he has known and felt, and remembering the wise words of Dean Alford, "What thou hast not by suffering bought, presume thou not to teach," would necessarily show to a sharp observer a great deal of himself and his inner being, even though rigidly avoiding the slightest suspicion of egotism in his preaching; and it need hardly be said that egotism is not to be tolerated in the pulpit.

After you have in an essay or a sermon described and condemned some evil tendency that is in human nature, you are ready to think that you have finally overcome it. And after you have described and commended some

good disposition, you are ready to think that you have attained it, and that you will not lose it again. And for the time, if you be an honest man, you *have* smashed the foe, you *have* gained the vantage ground. But, woe's me, the good disposition dies away, and the foe gradually revives and struggles to his legs again. Let us not fancy that because we have been (as we fancied) once right, we shall never go wrong. We must be always watchful. The enemy that seemed most thoroughly beaten may (apart from God's grace) beat us yet. The publican, when he went up to the temple to pray, expressed himself in a fashion handed down to all ages with the *imprimatur* upon it. Yet, for all his speaking so fairly, the day might come when, having grown a reformed character and gained general approbation, he would stand in a conspicuous place, and thank God that he was not as other men. Let us trust *that* day never came. Yet, if the publican had said to himself, as he went down to his house, Now I have attained an excellent pitch of morality; I am all right; I am a model for future generations, — that day would be very likely to come.

It is a humiliating and discouraging sight to behold a man plainly succumbing to an enemy which you fancied he had long got over. You may have seen an individual of more than middle age making a fool of himself by carrying on absurd flirtations with young girls, who were babies in long-clothes when he first was spoony. You would have said, looking at such a man's outward aspect, and knowing something of his history, that years had brought this compensation for what they had taken away, that he would not make a conspicuous ass of

himself any more. But the old enemy is too much for him ; and O how long that man's ears would appear, if the inner ass could be represented outwardly ! You may have seen such a one, after passing through a discipline which you would have expected to sober him, evincing a frantic exhilaration in the prospect of his third marriage. And you may have witnessed a person evincing a high degree of a folly he had unsparingly scourged in others. I have beheld, in old folk, manifestations of absurdity all very well in the very young, which suggested to me the vision of a stiff, spavined, lame, broken-down old hack, fit only for the knacker, trying to jauntily scamper about in a field with a set of spirited, fresh young colts. And looking at the spectacle, I have reflected on the true statement of the Venerable Bede, that there are no fools like old fools.

But here it may be said, that we are not to suppose that a thing is wrong, unless it can bear to be looked back on in cold blood. Many a word is spoken, and many a deed done, and fitly too, in the warmth of the moment, which will not bear the daylight of a time when the excitement is over. Mr. Caudle was indignant when his wife reminded him of his sayings before marriage. They sounded foolish now in Caudle's ears. This did not suffice to show that those sayings were not very fit at the time ; nor does it prove that the tendency to say many things under strong feeling is an enemy to be put down. You have said, with a trembling voice, and with the tear in your eye, things which are no discredit to you, though you might not be disposed to say the like just after coming out of your bath in the morning. You needed to be warmed up to a certain pitch ; and then the

spark was struck off. And only a very malicious or a very stupid person would remind you of these things when you are not in a correspondent vein.

And now that we have had this general talk about these old enemies, let us go on to look at some of them individually. It may do us good to poke up a few of the beasts, and to make them arise and walk about in their full ugliness, and then to smite them on the head as with a hammer. Let this be a new slaying of the slain, who never can be slain too often.

Perhaps you may not agree with me when I say that one of these beasts is Ambition. I mean unscrupulous self-seeking. You resolved, long ago, to give no harbor to that, and so to exclude the manifold evils that came of it. You determined that you would resolutely refuse to scheme, or push, or puff, or hide your honest opinions, or dodge in any way, for the purpose of getting on. You know how eager some people are to let their light shine before men, to the end that men may think what clever fellows those people are. You know how anxious some men are to set themselves right in newspapers and the like, and to stand fair (as they call it) with the public. You know how some men, when they do any good work, have recourse to means highly analogous to the course adopted by a class of persons long ago, who sounded a trumpet before them in the streets to call attention to their charitable deeds. I know individuals who constantly sound their own trumpet, and that a very brazen one, — sound it in conversation, in newspaper paragraphs, in advertisements, in speeches at public meetings. But you, an honest and modest person, were early disgusted

by that kind of thing, and you determined that you would do your duty quietly and faithfully, spending all your strength upon your work, and not sparing a large per centage of it for the trumpet. You resolved that you would never admit the thought of setting yourself more favorably before your fellow-creatures. You learned to look your humble position in the face, and to discard the idea of getting any mortal to think you greater or better than you are. Yes, you hope that the petty self-seeking, which keeps some men ever on the strut and stretch, has been outgrown by you; yet if you would be safe from one of the most contemptible foes of all moral manhood, you must keep your club in your hand, and every now and then quiet the creature by giving it a heavy blow on the head. St. Paul tells us that he had "*learned to be content.*" It cost him effort. It cost him time. It was not natural. He came down, we may be sure, with many a heavy stroke on the innate disposition to repine when things did not go in the way he wanted them. And that is what we must do.

As you look back now, it is likely enough that you recall a time when self-seeking seemed thoroughly dead in you. You were not very old, perhaps, yet you fancied that (by God's help) you had outgrown ambition. You did your work as well as you could, and in the evening you sat in your easy-chair by the fireside, looking not without interest at the feverish race of worldly competition, yet free from the least thought of running in it. As for thinking of your own eminence, or imagining that any one would take the trouble of talking about you, *that* never entered your mind. And as you beheld the eager pushing of other men, and their frantic endeavors

to keep themselves before the human race, you wondered what worldly inducement would lead you to do the like. But did you always keep in that happy condition? Did you not, now and then, feel some little waking up of the old thing, and become aware that you were being drawn into the current? If so, let us hope that you resolutely came out of it, and that you found quiet in the peaceful backwater, apart from that horrible feverish stream.

There is another old enemy, a two-headed monster, that is not done with when it has been killed once. It is a near relative of the last: it is the ugly creature Self-Conceit and Envy. I call it a two-headed monster, rather than two monsters; it is a double manifestation of one evil principle. Self-conceit is the principle as it looks at yourself; Envy is the same thing as it looks at other men. I fear it must be admitted that there is in human nature a disposition to talk bitterly of people who are more eminent and successful than yourself, and though you expel it with a pitchfork, that old enemy will come back again. This disposition exists in many walks of life. A Lord Chancellor has left on record his opinion, that nowhere is there so much envy and jealousy as among the members of the English bar. A great actor has declared that nowhere is there so much as among actors and actresses. Several authors have maintained that no human beings are so bitter at seeing one of themselves get on a little, as literary folk. And a popular preacher has been heard to say that envy and detraction go their greatest length among preachers. Let us hope that the last statement is *erroneous*. But I fear that these testimonies, coming

from quarters so various, lead to the conclusion that envy and detraction (which imply self-conceit) are too natural and common everywhere. You may have heard a number of men talking about one man in their own vocation who had got a good deal ahead of them, and who never had done them any harm, except thus getting ahead of them; and you may have been amazed at the awful animosity evinced towards the successful man. But success in others is a thing which some mortals cannot forgive. You may have known people savagely abuse a man because he set up a carriage, or because he moved to a finer house, or because he bought an estate in the country. You remember the outburst which followed when Macaulay dated a letter from Windsor Castle. Of course, the true cause of the outburst was that Macaulay should have been at Windsor Castle at all. Let us be thankful, my friend, that such an eminent distinction is not likely to happen either to you or me; we have each acquaintances who would never forgive us if it did. What a raking up of all the sore points in your history would follow, if the Queen were to ask you to dinner! And if you should ever succeed to a fortune, what unspeakable bitterness would be awakened in the hearts of Mr. Snarling and Miss Limejuice! If their malignant glances could lame your horses as you drive by them with that fine new pair, the horses would limp home with great difficulty; and if their eyes could set your grand house on fire, immediately on the new furniture going in, a heavy loss would fall either upon you or the insurance company.

But this will not do. As you read these lines, my friend, you picture yourself as the person who attains

the eminence and succeeds to the fortune ; and you picture Miss Limejuice and Mr. Snarling as two of your neighbors. But what I desire is, that you should change the case ; imagine your friend Smith preferred before you, and consider whether there would not be something of the Snarling tendency in yourself. Of course, you would not suffer it to manifest itself ; but it is there, and needs to be put down. And it needs to be put down more than once. You will now and then be vexed and mortified to find that, after fancying you had quite made up your mind to certain facts, you are far from really having done so. Well, you must just try again. You must look for help where it is always to be found. And in the long run you will succeed. It will be painful, after you fancied you had weeded out self-conceit and envy from your nature, to find yourself some day talking in a bitter and ill-set way about some man or some woman whose real offence is merely having been more prosperous than yourself. You thought you had got beyond that. But it is all for your good to be reminded that the old root of bitterness is there yet ; that you are never done with it ; that you must be always cutting it down. A gardener might as justly suppose that because he has mown down the grass of a lawn very closely to-day, the grass will never grow up and need mowing again, as we fancy that because we have unsparingly put down an evil tendency within us, we shall have no more trouble with it.

Did nature give you, my friend, or education develope in you, a power of saying or writing severe things, which might stick into people as the little darts stick into the bull at a Spanish bull-fight ? I believe that

there are few persons who might not, if their heart would let them, acquire the faculty of producing disagreeable things, expressed with more or less of neatness and felicity. And in the case of the rare man here and there, who says his ill-set saying with epigrammatic point, like the touch of a rapier, the ill-setness may be excused, because the thing is so gracefully said. We would not wish that tigers should be exterminated; but it is to be desired that they should be very few. Let there be spared a specimen, here and there, of the graceful, agile, ferocious savage. But you, my reader, were no great hand at epigrams, though you were ready enough with your ill-set remark; and after some experience, you concluded that there is something better in this world than to say things, however cleverly, that are intended to give pain. And so you determined to cut that off, and to go upon the kindly tack; to say a good and cheering word whenever you had the opportunity; to be ready with a charitable interpretation of what people do; and never to utter or to write a word that could vex a fellow-creature, who (you may be sure) has quite enough to vex him without your adding anything. Perhaps you did all this, rather overdoing the thing. Ill-set people are apt to overdo the thing when they go in for kindness and geniality. But some day, having met some little offence, the electricity that had been storing up during that season of repression, burst out in a flash of what may, by a strong figure, be called forked lightning; the old enemy had got the mastery again. And indeed a hasty temper, founding as it does mainly on irritability of the nervous system, is never quite got over. It may be much aggravated by yielding to it,

and much abated by constant restraint; but unless the beast be perpetually seen to, it is sure to be bursting out now and then. Socrates, you remember, said that his temper was naturally hasty and bad, but that philosophy had cured him. I believe it needs something much more efficacious than any human philosophy to work such a cure. No doubt, you may diligently train yourself to see what is to be said in excuse of the offences given you by your fellow-creatures, and to look at the case as it appears from their point of view. This will help. But though ill-temper, left to its natural growth, will grow always worse, there is a point at which it has been found to mend. When the nervous system grows less sensitive through age, hastiness of temper sometimes goes. The old enemy is weakened; the beast has been (so to speak) hamstrung. You will be told that the thing which mainly impressed persons who saw the great Duke of Wellington in the last months of his life, was what a mild, gentle old man he was. Of course, every one knows that he was not always so. The days were, when his temper was hot and hasty enough.

And thus thinking of physical influence, let us remember that what is vulgarly called nervousness is an enemy which many men know to their cost is not to be got over. The firmest assurance that you have done a thing many times, and so should be able to do it once more, may not suffice to enable you to look forward to doing it without a vague tremor and apprehension. There are human beings, all whose work is done without any very great nervous strain; there are others in whose vocation there come many times that put their

whole nature upon the stretch. And these times test a man. You know a horse may be quite lame, while yet it does not appear in walking. Trot the creature smartly, and the lameness becomes manifest. In like manner a man may be nervous, particular, crotchety, superstitious, while yet this may not appear till you trot him sharply. Put him at some work that must be done with the full stretch of his powers, and then you will see that he has got little odd ways of his own. I do not know what is the sensation of going into battle, and finding oneself under fire; but short of that, I think the greatest strain to which a human being is usually subjected is that of the preacher. A little while ago, I was talking with a distinguished clergyman, and being desirous of comparing his experience with that of his juniors, I asked him, —

1. Whether, in walking to church on Sunday to preach, he did not always walk on the same side of the street? Whether he would not feel uncomfortable, and as if something were going wrong, if he made any change?

2. Whether when waiting in the vestry, the minute or two before the beadle should come to precede him into church, he did not always stand on the same spot? Whether it would not put him out of gear, to vary from that?

My eminent friend answered all these questions in the affirmative. Of course there are a great many men to whom I should no more have thought of proposing such questions than I should think of proposing them to a rhinoceros. Such men, probably, have no little ways; and if they had, they would not admit that they had.

But my friend is so very able a man, and so very sincere a man, that he had no reason to be afraid of any one thinking him little, though he acknowledged to having his little fancies. And indeed, when you come to know people well, you will find that they have all ways that are quite analogous to Johnson's touching the tops of all the posts as he walked London streets. They would not exactly say, that they are afraid of anything happening to them if they deviated from the old track, but they think it just as well to keep on the safe side, by not deviating from it.

Possibly there was a period in your life in which you had no objection to get into controversies upon political or religious subjects with other men; which controversies gradually grew angry, and probably ended in mutual abuse, but assuredly not in conviction. But having remarked, in the case of other controversialists, what fools they invariably made of themselves; having remarked their ludicrous exaggeration of the importance of their dispute, and the malice and disingenuousness with which they carried on their debate (more especially if they were clergymen); having remarked, in brief, how very little a controversialist ever looks like a Christian, — you turned, in loathing, from the whole thing, and resolved that you would never get into a controversy, public or private, with any mortal upon any subject any more. Stick to that resolution, my friend; it is a good one. But you will occasionally be tempted to break it. Whenever the old enemy assails you, just think what a demagogue or agitator, political or religious, looks like in the eyes of all sensible and honest men!

Perhaps you had a tendency to be suspicious, and

you have broken yourself of it. Perhaps your temptation was to be easily worried by little cross-accidents, and to get needlessly excited. Perhaps your temptation was to laziness, to putting off duty till to-morrow, to untidiness, to moral cowardice. Whatever it was, my friend, never think yourself so cured of an evil habit, that you may cease to mow it down. If Demosthenes had left off attending to his speaking, he would have relapsed into his old evil ways. If St. Paul, after having learned to be content, had ceased to see to that, he would gradually have grown a grumbler.

I am going to close this little procession of old enemies which has passed before our eyes by naming a large and general one. It is Folly. My friend, if you have attained to any measure of common sense now, you know what a tremendous fool you were once. If you do not know that, then you are a fool still. Ah, reader, wise and good, you know all the weakness, the silliness, the absurd fancies and dreams, that have been yours. I presume that you are ready to give up a great part of your earlier life: you have not a word to say for it. All your desire is that it should in charity be forgotten. But surely you will not now make a fool of yourself any more. There shall be no more now of the hasty talking, the vamping about your own importance, the idiotic sayings and doings you wish you could bury in Lethe; and which you may be very sure certain of your kind friends carefully remember and occasionally recall. But now and then the logic of facts will convince you that the old enemy is not quite annihilated yet, and you say something you regret the moment it is uttered; you do something which indicates that you have lost your head *for the time*.

Let it be said, in conclusion, as the upshot of the whole matter, that the wise man will never think he is safe till he has reached a certain place where no enemy can assail him more. I beg my friend Mr. Snarling to take notice, that I do not pretend to have pointed out in these pages the worst of those old enemies that get up again and run at us after they had been knocked on the head once, and more than once.

If this had been a sermon, I should have given you a very different catalogue, and one that would have awakened more serious thoughts. Not but that those which have been named are well worth thinking of. The day will never come, in this world, on which it will be safe for us to sit down in perfect security, and to say to ourselves, now we need keep no watch; we may (in a moral sense) draw the charge from our revolver because it will not be needed; we may fall asleep, and nothing will meddle with us the while. For all around us, my friend, are the old enemies of our souls and our salvation; some aiming at nothing more than to make us disagreeable and repulsive, petty and jealous; others aiming at nothing less than to make us unfit for the only home where we can know perfect rest and peace; some stealing upon us more stealthily, silently, fatally, than ever the Indian crept through the darkness of night upon the traveller nodding over his watch-fire; some coming down upon us, strong and sudden as the tiger's agile spring. Well, we know what to do: we must watch and pray. And the time will come at length when the pack of wolves shall be lashed off for ever; when the evil within us shall be killed outright, and beyond all reviving; and when the evil around us shall *be gone*.



## CHAPTER X.

### AT THE CASTLE: WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON MICHAEL SCOTT'S FAMILIAR SPIRIT.

**N**OT on a study-table in a back parlor in a great city shall these little blue pages be covered with written characters. Every word shall be written in the open air. The page shall be lighted by sunshine that comes through no glass, but which is tempered by coming through masses of green leaves. And this essay is not to be composed; not to be screwed out, to use the figure of Mr. Thackeray; not to be pumped out, to use the figure of *Festus*. It shall grow without an effort. When any thought occurs, the pencil shall note it down. No thought shall be hurried in its coming.

You know how after a good many months of constant work, with the neck always at the collar, you grow wearied and easily worried. Little things become burdensome; and the best of work is felt as a task. You cannot reason yourself out of that; ten days' rest is the thing that will do it. Be thankful if then you can have such a season of quiet in as green and shady a nook of country as mortal eyes could wish to see; in a nook like this, amid green grass and green trees, and

the wild flowers of the early summer. For this is little more than midway in the pleasant month of May.

It is a very warm, sunshiny morning. This is a little open glade of rich grass, lighted up with daisies and buttercups. The little glade is surrounded by large forest-trees ; under the trees there is a blaze of prim-roses and wild hyacinths. A soft west wind, laden with the fragrance of lilac and apple blossoms, wakes the gentlest of sounds (in a more expressive language than ours it would have been called *susurrus*) in the topmost branches, gently swaying to and fro. The swaying branches cast a flecked and dancing shadow on the grass below. Midway the little glade is beyond the shadow ; and there the grass, in the sunbeams, has a tinge of gold. A river runs by, with a ceaseless murmur over the warm stones. Look to the right hand, and there, over the trees, two hundred yards off, you may see a gray and red tower motionless above the waving branches ; and lower down, hardly surmounting the wood, a stretch of massive wall, with huge buttresses. Tower and wall crown a lofty knoll, which the river encircles, making it a peninsula. Wallflower grows in the crannies ; a little wild apple-tree, covered with white blossoms, crowns a detached fragment of a ruined gateway ; sweetbrier grows at the base of the ancient walls ; ivy and honeysuckle climb up them ; and where great fragments of fallen wall testify to the excellence of the mortar of the eleventh century, wild roses have rooted themselves in masses, which are now only green. That is THE CASTLE, all that can be seen of it from this point. There is more to be said of it hereafter. Hard by this spot, two little children are sitting on the grass, to whom some one is reading a story.

The wise man will never weary of looking at green grass and green trees. It is an unspeakable refreshment to the eye and the mind; and the daily pressure of occupation cannot touch one here. One wonders that human beings who always live amid such scenery do not look more like it. But some people are utterly unimpressible by the influences of outward scenery. You may know men who have lived for many years where Nature has done her best with wood and rock and river; and even when you become well acquainted with them, you cannot discover the faintest trace in their talk or in their feeling of the mightily powerful touch (as it would be to many) which has been unceasingly laid upon them through all that time. Or you may have beheld a vacuous person at a picnic party, who, amid traces of God's handiwork that should make men hold their breath, does but pass from the occupation of fatuously flirting with a young woman like himself, to furiously abusing the servants for not sufficiently cooling the wine.

A great many of the highly respectable people, we all know, are entirely in the case of the hero of that exquisite poem of Wordsworth's, which Jeffrey never could bring himself to like:—

"But Nature ne'er could find her way  
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

"In vain, through every changing year,  
Did Nature lead him as before;  
A primrose by a river's brim  
A yellow primrose was to him,  
And it was nothing more."

A human being ought to be very thankful if his dis-

position be such that he heartily enjoys green grass and green trees ; for there are clever men who do not. In a little while I shall tell you of an extraordinary and anomalous taste expressed on that subject by one of the cleverest men I know. If a man has a thousand a year, and his next neighbor five hundred, and if the man with five hundred makes his income go just as far as the larger one (and an approximation to doing so may be made by good management), it is plain that these two mortals are, in respect to income, on the same precise footing. The poorer man gets so much more enjoyment out of his yearly revenue as makes up for the fact that the richer man's revenue is twice as great.

There is a like compensation provided for the lack of material advantages in the case of many men, through their intense appreciation of the beauty of natural scenery, and of very simple things. A rich man may possess the acres, with their yearly rental ; a poor man, such as a poet, a professor, a schoolmaster, a clergyman, or the like, may possess the landscape which these acres make up, to the utter exclusion of the landed proprietor. Perhaps, friendly reader, God has not given you the earthly possessions which it has pleased Him to give to some whom you know, but He may have given you abundant recompense by giving you the power of getting more enjoyment out of little things than many other men. You live in a little cottage, and your neighbor in a grand castle ; you have a small collection of books, and your neighbor a great one of fine editions in sumptuous bindings and in carved oak cases ; yet you may have so great delight in your snug house, and your familiar volumes, that in regard of actual enjoyment you

may be the more enviable man. A green field with a large oak in the middle, a hedge of blossoming hawthorn, a thatched cottage under a great maple, twenty square yards of velvety turf, — how really happy such things can make some simple folk !

Of course it occurs to one that the same people who get more enjoyment out of little pleasures will get more suffering out of anything painful. Because your tongue is more sensitive than the palm of your hand, it is aware of the flavor of a pineapple which your palm would ignore, but it is also liable to know the taste of *assa-foetida*, of which your palm would be unconscious. The supersensitive nervous system is finely strung to discern pain as well as pleasure. No one knows, but the over-particular person, what a pure misery it is to go into an untidy room, if it be your own. There are people who suffer as much in having a tooth filed as others in losing a limb. A Frenchman, some years since, committed suicide, leaving a written paper to say he had done so because life was rendered unendurable through his being so much bitten by fleas. This is not a thing to smile at. That poor man, before his reason was upset, had probably endured torments of which those around had not the faintest idea. I have heard a good man praised for the patience with which he bore daily for weeks the surgeon's dressing of a very severe wound. The good man was thought heroic. I knew him well enough to be sure that the fact was that his nature was dull and slow. He did not suffer as average men would have suffered under that infliction. There are human beings in touching whose moral nature you feel you are touching the impenetrable skin of the hippopotamus. There

are human beings in touching whose moral nature you feel you are touching the bare tip of a nerve. Eager, anxious men are prone to envy imperturbable and slow-moving men. My friend Smith, who is of an eager nature, tells me he looks with a feeling a few degrees short of veneration on a massive-minded and immovable being, who in telling a story makes such long pauses at the end of each sentence that you fancy the story done. Then poor Smith breaks in hastily with something he wants to say, but the massive-minded man, not noticing him, continues his parable till he pauses again at the end of another sentence. And Smith is made to feel as though he were very young.

I have said that likings vary in regard to such matters as the enjoyment of this scene. O this green grass, rich, unutterably green, with the buttercups and daisies, with the yellow broom and the wild bees, and the environment of bright leafy trees that inclose you round; to think that there are people who do not care for you! It was but yesterday, in a street of a famous and beautiful city, I met my friend Mr. Keene. Keene is a warm-hearted, magnanimous, unselfish, brave, out-spoken human being, as fine a fellow as is numbered among the clergy of either side of the Tweed. Besides these things, he is an admirable debater; fluent, ready, eloquent, hearty, fully persuaded that he is right, and that his opponents are invariably wrong, and not without some measure of smartness and sharpness in expression. Keene approached me with a radiant face, the result partly of inherent good nature, and partly of a very hot summer day. He had come to the city to take part in

the debates of the great ecclesiastical council of a northern country. I was coming to this place. He was entering the city, in fact, for many days of deliberation and debate; I was departing from it for certain days of rest and recreation. I could not refrain from displaying some measure of exultation at the contrast between our respective circumstances. "I shall be lying to-morrow," I said, "on green grass under green trees, while you will be existing" (the word used indeed was stewing) "in that crowded building, with its feverish atmosphere highly charged with carbonic-acid gas." To these words Keene replied, with simple earnestness: "I shall be quite happy there; I don't care a straw for green grass and green leaves!" Such was the sentiment of that eminent man. I pity him sincerely!

Here I paused, and thought for a little of the great ecclesiastical council and of lesser ecclesiastical councils, and the following reflection suggested itself:—

Our good principles are too often like Don Quixote's helmet. We arrive at them in leisure, in cool blood, with an unexcited brain, which is commonly called a clear head; then in actual life they too commonly fail at the first real trial. Don Quixote made up his helmet carefully with a visor of pasteboard. Then, to ascertain whether it was strong enough, he dealt it a blow with his sword; thereupon it went to pieces.

In like manner, in our better and more thoughtful hours, we resolve to be patient, forgiving, charitable, kind-spoken, unsuspicious,—in short Christian, for *that* includes all,—and the first time we are irritated we fail. We grow very angry at some small offence; we speak

harshly, we act unfairly. I have heard a really good man preach. Afterwards I heard him speak in a lesser ecclesiastical council. He preached (so far as the sentiments expressed went) like an angel. He argued like just the reverse.

Ah, we make up our helmets with pasteboard. We resolve that henceforth we shall act on the most noble principles. And the helmets look very well so long as they are not put to the test. We fancy ourselves charitable, forgiving, Christian people, so long as we are not tried. A stroke with a sword, and the helmet goes to tatters. An attack on us, a reflection on us, a hint that we ever did wrong, and oh, the wretched outburst of wrath, bitterness, unfairness, malignity!

Of course, the best of men, as it has been said, are but men at the best. Let us be humble. Let there be no vain self-confidence; and especially let us, entering on every scene that can possibly try us, (and when do we escape from such a scene?) earnestly ask the guidance of that Blessed Spirit of Whom is every good feeling and purpose in us, and without Whom our best resolutions will snap like reeds just when they are needed most to stand firm.

There is more to be said about the Castle. It is not a castle to which you go that you may enjoy the society of dukes and other nobles, such as form the daily associates of the working clergy. By the payment of a moderate weekly stipend, this castle may become yours. The castle is in ruins; but a little corner amid the great masses of crumbling stones, which were placed here by strong hands dead for eight hundred years, has

been patched up so as to make an unpretending little dwelling; and there you may find the wainscotted rooms, the quaint panelled ceilings of mingled timber and plaster, the winding turret stairs, the many secret doors, of past centuries. The castle stands on a lofty promontory of no great extent, which a little river encircles on two sides, and which a deep ravine cuts off from the surrounding country on the other two sides. You approach the castle over an arch of seventy feet in height, which spans the ravine. In former days it was a drawbridge. The bridge runs out of the inner court of the castle; midway in its length it turns off at almost a right angle, till it joins the bank on the other side of the ravine. That little bridge makes a charming place to walk on, and it is a great deal longer than any quarter-deck. It is all grown over with masses of ancient ivy, the fragrance of a sweetbrier hedge in the castle court pervades it at present; you look down from it upon a deep glen, through which the little river flows. The tops of the tall trees are far beneath you; there are various plane-trees with their thick leaves. Wherever you look, it is one mass of rich foliage. Trees fill up the ravine, trees clothe the steep bank on the other side of the river, trees have rooted themselves in wonderful spots in the old walls, trees clothe the ascent that leads from the castle to that little summit near, crowned with one of the loveliest creations of the Gothic architect's skill. *That* is the chancel of a large church, of which only the chancel was ever built; and if you would behold a little chapel of inexpressible perfection and beauty, if you would discern the traces of the faithful and loving toil of men who have been for hundreds of years in

their graves, if you would look upon ancient stones that seem as if they had grown and blossomed like a tree, then find out where that chapel is, and go and see it.

But you pass over the bridge; and under a ruined gateway, where part of a broken arch hangs over the passer-by, you enter the court. On the right hand, ruined walls of vast thickness. The like on the left hand, but midway there is the little portion that is habitable. Enter: pass into a pretty large wainscotted parlor; look out of the windows on the further side. You are a hundred feet above the garden below, — for on that side there is below you story after story of low-browed chambers, arched in massive stone, and lower still, the castle wall rises from the top of a precipice of perpendicular rock. On the further side from the river, the chambers are hewn out of the living stone. What a view from the window of that parlor first mentioned! Beneath, the garden, bright now with blossoming apple-trees, bounded by the river, and, beyond the river, a bank of wood three hundred feet in height. A little window in a corner looks down the course of the stream; there is a deep dell of wood, one thick luxuriance of foliage, with here and there the gleam of the flowing water.

This is our place of rest. Add to all that has been said an inexpressible sense of a pervading quiet.

Do you find, when you come to a place where you are to have a brief holiday, a tendency to look back on the work you have been doing, and to estimate what it has come to after all? And have you found, even after many months of grinding as hard as you could, that it was mortifying to see how little was the permanent re-

sult? Such seems to be the effect of looking back on work. One thinks of a case parallel to the present feeling. There was Jacob, looking back on a long life, on a hundred and twenty years, and saying, sincerely, that his days had been few and evil. Now, in a blink of rest, my friend, look back on the results you have accomplished in those months of hard work. You thought them many and good at the time, now they seem to be no better than few and evil. It is humiliating to think how little permanent result is got by a working day. To bring things to book, to actually count and weigh them, always makes them look less. You may remember a calculation made by the elder Disraeli, as to the amount of matter a man could read in a lifetime. It is very much less than you would have thought, — perhaps one tenth of what an ordinary person would guess. Thackeray, in his days of matured and practised power, thought it a good day's work to write six of the little pages of *Esmond*. A distinguished and experienced author told me that he esteemed three pages of the *Quarterly Review* a good day's work. Some men judge a sermon, which can be given in little more than half an hour, a sufficient result of the almost constant thought of a week. Six little pages, as the sole abiding result of a day on which the sun rose and set, and the clock went the round of the four-and-twenty hours, — on which you took your bath, and your breakfast, and read your newspaper, and in short went through the round of employments which make your habitude of being. Six pages, — skimmed by the reader in five minutes! The truth is, that a great part of our energy goes just to bear the burden of the day, to do the work of the


time, and we have only the little surplus of abiding possession. The way to keep ourselves from getting mortified and disheartened when we look back on the remaining result of all our work, is to remember that we are not here merely to work, — merely to produce that which shall be an abiding memorial of us. It is well if all we do and bear is forming our nature and character into something which we can willingly take with us when we go away from this life.

This morning after breakfast I was sitting on the parapet of the bridge already mentioned, looking down upon the tops of two plane-trees, and feeling a great deal the better for the sight. I believe it does good to an ordinary mortal to look down on the top of a large tree, and see the branches gently waving about. Little outward phenomena have a wonderful effect in soothing and refreshing the mind. Some men say the sight and sound of the sea calms and cheers them. You know how when a certain old prophet was beaten and despairing, the All-wise thought it would be good for him to behold certain sublime manifestations of the power of the Almighty. We cannot explain the rationale of the process, but these things do us good. A wise and good and most laborious man told me that when he feels overworked and desponding, he flies away to Chamouni and looks at Mont Blanc, and in a few days he is set right. It was not a fanciful man who said that there is scenery in this world that would soothe even remorse. And for an ordinary person, not a great genius and not a great ruffian, give us a lofty bridge whence you may look down upon a great plane-tree.

All this, however, is a deviation. Sitting on the bridge and enjoying the scene, this thought arose: Greatly as one enjoys and delights in this, what would the feeling be if one were authoritatively commanded to remain in this beautiful place, doing nothing, for a month? And one could not but confess that the feeling would not be pleasant. The things you enjoy most intensely you enjoy for but a short time, then you are satiated. When parched with thirst, what so delightful as the first draught of fair water? But if you were compelled to drink a fourth and fifth tumbler, the water would become positively nauseous. So is it with rest. You enjoy it keenly for a little while, but constrained idleness, being prolonged, would make you miserable. Ten days here are delightful; then back, with fresh appetite and vigor, to the dear work. But a month here, thus early in the year, would be a fearful infliction. You have not earned the autumn holidays as yet.

It is in human nature, that when you feel the pressure of anything painfully, you fancy that the opposite thing would set you right. When you are extremely busy and distracted by a host of things demanding thought, you think that pure idleness would be pleasant. So, in boyhood, on a burning summer day, you thought it would be delicious to feel cold. You went to bathe in the sea, and you found it a great deal too cold.

Charles Lamb, for a great part of his life, was kept very busy at uncongenial work. Oftentimes, through those irksome hours, he thought how pleasant it would be to be set free from that work forever. So he said that if he had a son, the son should be called NOTHING TO DO, and he should do nothing. Of course, Elia



spoke only half-seriously. We know what he meant. But, in sober earnest, we can all see that NOTHING TO DO would have been a miserable as well as a wicked man. He would assuredly have grown a bad fellow ; and he would just as surely have been a wretched being.

Every one knows the story of Michael Scott and his Familiar Spirit. Of late I have begun to understand the meaning of that story.

Michael Scott, it is recorded, had a Familiar Spirit under his charge. We do not know how Michael Scott first got possession of that Spirit. Probably he raised it, and then could not get rid of it : like the man who begged Dr. Log to propose a toast, and then Dr. Log spoke for three quarters of an hour. Michael Scott had to provide employment for that being, on pain of being torn in pieces. Michael gave the Spirit very difficult things to do. They were done with terrible ease and rapidity. The three peaks of the Eildon Hills were formed in a single night. A weir was built across the Tweed in a like time. Michael Scott was in a terrible state. In these days, he would probably have desired the Spirit to make and lay the Atlantic Telegraph Cable. But a happy thought struck him. He bade his Familiar make a rope of sea-sand. Of course, this provided unlimited occupation. The thing could never be finished. And the wizard was all right.

These things are an allegory. Michael Scott's Familiar Spirit is your own mind, my friend. Your own mind demands that you find it occupation ; and if you do not, it will make you miserable. It is an awful

thing to have nothing to do. The mill within you demands grist to grind ; and if you give it none, it still grinds on, as Luther said ; but it is itself it grinds and wears away. My friend Smith, having overworked his eyes at college, was once forbid to read or write for eighteen months. It was a horrible penance at first. But he devised ways of giving the machine work ; and during that period of enforced idleness, he acquired the power of connected thinking without writing down each successive thought. Few people have that power. One of the rarest of all acquirements is the faculty of profitable meditation. Most human beings, when they fancy they are meditating, are in fact doing nothing at all, and thinking of nothing.

You will remember what was once said by a lively French writer, — that we commonly think of idleness as one of the beatitudes of heaven ; while we ought rather to think of it as one of the miseries of hell. It was an extreme way which that writer took of testifying to the tormenting power of Michael Scott's Familiar Spirit.

And one evil in this matter is, that it is just the men who lead the most active and useful lives, who are making Michael Scott's Spirit more insatiable. You give it abundance to do ; and so when work is cut off from it, it becomes rampageous. You lose the power of sitting still and doing nothing. You find it inexpressibly irksome to travel by railway for even half an hour, with nothing to read. For the most handy way of pacifying the Spirit is to give it something to read. People tell you how disgusting it was when they had to wait for three quarters of an hour for the train at some little country railway station. Michael Scott's Spirit was worrying

and tormenting them, being kept without employment for that time. You know to what shifts people will have recourse, rather than have the Familiar Spirit coming and tormenting them. To give grist to the mill, to provide the Familiar Spirit with something to do, on a railway journey of twelve hours, they will read all the advertisements in their newspaper : they will go back a second and a third time over all the news ; they will even diligently peruse the leading article of the *Little Pedlington Gazette*. They read the advertisements in *Bradshaw*. They try to make out, from that publication, how to reach, by many corresponding trains, some little cross-country place to which they never intend to go. Anything rather than be idle. Anything rather than lean back, quite devoid of occupation, and feel the Familiar Spirit worrying away within, as Prometheus felt the vulture at his liver. When I hear a young fellow say of some country place where he has been spending some time, that it is a horribly slow place, that it is the deadest place on earth, I am aware that he did not find occupation there for Michael Scott's Familiar Spirit.

One looks with interest at people in whose case that Spirit seems to have been lulled into torpidity, has been brought to what a practical philosopher called a *dormouse state*. I read last night in a book how somebody " leant his cheek on his hand and gazed abstractedly into the fire." One who has trained the Familiar Spirit to an insatiable appetite for work can hardly believe such a thing possible. You may remember a picture in a volume of the illustrated edition of the *Waverley Novels*, which represents a plump old abbot, sitting satisfied in a

large chair, with the light of the fire on his face, doing nothing, thinking of nothing, and quite tranquil and content. One sometimes thinks, Would we could do the like! That fat, stupid old abbot had led so idle a life that the muscular power of the Familiar Spirit was abated, and its craving for work gone.

When you are wearied with long work, my reader, I wish you may have a place like this to which to come and rest. How good and pleasant it is for a little while! Your cares and burdens fall off from you. How insignificant many things look to one, sitting on this green grass, or looking over this bridge down into the green dell, that worried one in the midst of duty! If you were out in a hurricane at sea, and your boat got at last into a little sheltered cove, you would be glad and thankful. But only for a short time. In a little, you would be weary of staying there. We are so made that we cannot for any length of time remain quiescent and do nothing. And we cannot live on the past. The Familiar Spirit will not chew the cud, so to speak; you must give him fresh provender to grind. Perhaps there have been days in your life which were so busy with hard work, so alive with what to you were great interests, so happy with a bewildering bliss, that you fancied you would be able to look back on them and to live in them all your life, and they would be a possession for ever. Not so. It is the present on which we must live. You can no more satisfy Michael Scott's Spirit with the remembrance of former occupations and enjoyments than you can allay your present hunger with the remembrance of beef-steaks brought you by the plump head-waiter at "The Cock," half a dozen years

ago. Each day must bring its work, or the Spirit will be at you and stick pins into you.

A power of falling asleep enables one to evade the Spirit. At night, going to bed, looking for a sleepless night, how many a man has said, Oh for forgetfulness! When you have escaped into *that* realm, the Spirit can trouble you no more. You know the wish which Hood puts on the lips of Eugene Aram, tortured by an unendurable recollection, that he could shut his mind and clasp it with a clasp, as he could close his book and clasp it. Few men are more to be envied than those who have this power. Napoleon had it. So had the Duke of Wellington. At any moment either of these men could escape into a region where they were entirely free from the pressure of those anxieties which weighed them down while awake. Once the Duke, with his aide-de-camp, came galloping up to a point of the British lines whence an attack was to be made. He was told the guns would not be ready to open for two hours. "Then," said he, "we had better have a sleep." He sat down in a trench, leant his back against its side, and was fast asleep in a minute. That great man could at any time escape from Michael Scott's Spirit; could get into a country where the Spirit could not follow him. For in dreamless sleep you escape from yourself.

I have been told that there is another means of lulling that insatiable being into a state in which it ceases to be troublesome and importunate. It is tobacco. Some men say that the smoking of that fragrant weed soothes them into a perfect calm, in which they are pleasantly conscious of existing, but have no wish to do anything. Let me confess, notwithstanding, that I esteem smoking

as one of the most offensive and selfish of the lesser sins. When I see smoke pouring out of the window of a railway carriage not specially allotted to smokers, I go no farther for evidence that that carriage is occupied by selfish snobs.

Young children have Michael Scott's Familiar Spirit to find employment for, just as much as their seniors. Who does not yet remember the horrible feeling which you expressed when a child by saying you had *nothing to do*? I have just heard a little thing say to his mother, "Read me a story to make the time pass quick." That was his way of saying, "to pacify the Familiar Spirit." And we talk of *killing Time*, as though he were an enemy to be reduced to helplessness. There is an offensive phrase which sets all the idea more distinctly. There are silly fellows who ask you what o'clock it is by saying, "*How goes the enemy?*" This phrase indeed suggests thoughts too solemn and awful for this page. Let me ask, in a word, if Time be such, how about Eternity? But in every such case as those named, the enemy is not Time. It is Michael Scott's Familiar Spirit demanding occupation. How fast Time goes, when the Spirit is pleasantly or laboriously employed! When people talk of killing Time, they mean knocking that strange being on the head, so to speak; stunning it for the hour. *That* may be done, but it is soon up again, importunate as ever.

I suppose, my reader, that you can remember times in which the face you loved best looked its sweetest; and tones, pleasanter than all the rest, of the voice that was always pleasantest to hear; thoughtful looks of the

little child you seek in vain in the man in whom you lost it; and smiles of the little child that died. Touched as with the light of eternity, these things stand forth amid the years of past time; they are as the mountain tops rising over the mists of oblivion; they are the possessions which will never pass your remembrance till you cease to remember at all. And you know that Nature too has her moments of special transfiguration; times when she looks so fair and sweet that you are compelled to think that *she* would do well enough (for all the thorns and thistles of the Fall), if you could but get quit of the ever-intruding blight of sin and sorrow. Such a season is this bright morning, with its sunshine that seems to us (in our ignorance) fair and joyous enough for that place where there is no night; with its leaves green and living (would they but last) as we can picture of the Tree of Life; with its cheerful quiet that is a little foretaste of the perfect rest which shall last forever. It is very nearly time to go back to work, but we shall cherish this remembrance of the place; and so it will be green and sunshiny through winter days.





## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCERNING THE RIGHT TACK: WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON THE WRONG TACK.

**N**OT many days since, I was walking along a certain street, in a certain city; and there I beheld two little boys of the better sort fighting furiously. There are people, claiming to be what is vulgarly called Muscular Christians, who think that a certain amount of fighting among boys is to be very much encouraged, as a thing tending to make the little fellows manly and courageous. For myself, I believe that God's law is wise as well as right; and I do not believe that angry passion (which God's law condemns), or that vindictive efforts to do mischief to a fellow-creature (which God's law also condemns), are things which deserve to be in any way encouraged, or are things likely to develop in either man or boy the kind of character which wise and good people would wish to see. Accordingly I interposed in the fight, and sought to make peace between the little men; supporting my endeavors by some general statement to the effect that good boys ought not to be fighting in that way. They stopped at once: no doubt both had had enough of that kind of thing. For one had a bloody



nose, and the other had a rudimentary black eye, which next morning would be manifest. But one of them defended himself against the charge of having done anything wrong, by saying, with the energy of one who was quite assured that he had the principles of eternal justice on his side, "I have a right to hit him, because he hit me first!"

Of course, these were suggestive words. And I could not but think to myself, walking away from the little fellows after having composed their strife, Now *there* is the principle upon which this world goes on. There is not a deeper-rooted tendency in human nature than that which is exhibited in that saying of that fine little boy. For he *was* a fine little boy, and so was the other. The great principle on which most human beings go, in all the relations and all the doings of life, is just that which is compendiously expressed in the words, "I have a right to hit you, if you hit me first." You may trace the manifestations of that great principle in all possible walks of life, and among all sorts and conditions of men. One man or woman says something unkind of another: the other feels quite entitled to retaliate by saying something unkind of the first. And this tendency appears early. I once heard a little boy of four years old say, with some indignation of manner: "Miss Smith said I was a troublesome monkey: if she ever says *that* again, I'll say that she is an ugly old maid!" One man says, in print, something depreciatory of another; finds fault with something the other man has said, or written, or done. Then the other man retorts in kind: pays off the first man by publishing something depreciatory of *him*. A great many of the

political essays which we read in the newspapers, and a great many of the reviews of books we meet, are manifestly dictated and inspired by the purpose to revenge some personal offence, to clear off scores by hitting the man who has hit you. A sharp, clever person reads the book written by an enemy, with the determination to pick holes in it; not that the book is bad, or that he thinks it bad; but its author has given him some offence, and *that* is to be retaliated. You remember, of course, that very clever and very bitter article on Mr. Croker's edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, which is contained in Lord Macaulay's selection of essays from the *Edinburgh Review*. Was there any mortal who supposed that when Macaulay's own *History of England* appeared, Mr. Croker would review it otherwise than with a determination to find faults in it? Was there any mortal surprised to find that Mr. Croker, having been hit by Macaulay, endeavored to hit Macaulay again? And if Macaulay's *History* had been absolutely immaculate, had been a thousand times better than it is, do you suppose *that* would appreciably have affected the tone of Mr. Croker's review of it? I am far from saying that Mr. Croker deliberately made up his mind to do injustice to Lord Macaulay. It is likely enough he thought Macaulay richly deserved all the ill he said of him. A great law of mind governs even human beings who never came to a formal resolution of obeying it; as a stream never pauses to consider whether, at a certain point, it shall run downhill or up. When Sir Bulwer Lytton, in his poem of *The New Timon*, alluded to Mr. Tennyson in disparaging terms as *Miss Alfred*, no one was surprised to read, in a few

days, that terribly trenchant copy of verses in which Mr. Tennyson called Sir Bulwer a Bandbox, and showed that the true Timon was quite a different man from the Bandbox with his mane in curl-papers. For such is the incongruous imagery which the reader will carry away from that poem. And if you happen, my reader, to be acquainted with three or four men who have opportunity to carry on their quarrels in print, or by speeches in deliberative assemblies, and if you refuse to take part in the quarrels which divide them, and keep resolutely on friendly terms with all, you will be struck by the fact that the system of mutual hitting and retaliation, carried on for a while, quite incapacitates these men for doing each other anything like justice. Each will occasionally caution you against his adversary as a very wicked and horrible person; while you, knowing both, are well aware that each is in the main an able and good-hearted human being, not without some salient faults, of course; and that the image of each which is present to the mind of the other is a frightful caricature; is about as like the being represented as the most awful photograph ever taken by an ingenious youthful amateur is like you, my good-looking friend. I have named deliberative assemblies. Everybody knows in how striking a fashion you will find the great principle of retaliation exhibited in such; and nowhere, I lament to say, more decidedly than in presbyteries, synods, and general assemblies, where you might naturally expect better things. I have heard a revered friend say, that only the imperative sense of duty would ever lead him to such places; and that the effect of their entire tone upon his moral and spiritual nature was the very reverse

of healthful. One man, in a speech, says something sharp of another : of course, when the first man sits down, the second gets up, and says something unkind of his brother. And you will sometimes find men, with a calculating rancor, and with what Mr. Croker, speaking of Earl Russell, called "a spiteful slyness," wait their opportunity, that they may deal the return blow at the time and place where it will be most keenly felt. Now all this, which is bad in anybody, is more evidently bad in men who on the previous Sunday were, not improbably, preaching on the duty of forgiving injuries. All clergymen have frequent occasion to repeat certain words which run to the effect, "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Yet you may find a clergyman here and there whose reputation is high as a very hard hitter, and as one who never suffers any breath of assault to pass without keenly retaliating. If you touch such a man, however distantly ; if, in the midst of a general panegyric, you venture to hint that anything he has done is wrong, he will flare up, and you will have a savage reply. You know the consequence of touching *him*, just as you know the consequence of giving a kick to a ferocious bulldog. Now, is that a fine thing ? Is it anything to boast of ? I have heard a middle-aged man (not a clergyman) state in an ostentatious manner, that he never forgot an offence ; that whoever touched him would some day (as schoolboys say) *catch it*. All this struck me as tremendously small. In the case of most people who talk in that way, it is not true. They are not nearly so bad as they would like you to think them. They don't cherish resentments in that vindictive way.

But if it were true, it would be nothing to be proud of. I have heard a man boast that he had never thanked anybody for anything all his life. I thought him very silly. He expected me to think him very great. I well remember how, in a certain senate, after two older members, each a wise and good man when you got him in his right mind, had spent some time in mutual recrimination, a younger member took occasion to point out that all this was very far from being right or pleasing. To which one of the good men replied, in a ferocious voice, and with a very red face, as if *that* answer settled the matter, "*But who began it?*" No doubt, the other *had* begun it; and that good man took refuge in the angry schoolboy's principle, "I have a right to hit him, because he hit me!"

I have been speaking, you see, of those little offences, and those little retaliations, which we have occasion to observe daily in the comparative trimness and restraint of modern life, and in a state of society where a certain Christian tone of feeling, and the strong hand of the law, limit the offences which can be commonly given, and the vengeance which can be commonly taken. My good friend A, who has been several times attacked in print by B, would probably kick B, if various social restraints did not prevent him. But, however open the way might be, I really don't believe that A would cut B's throat, or burn his house and children and other possessions. No; I don't think he would. Still, there is nothing I less like to do than to talk in a dogmatic and confident fashion. If Mr. C applies to the university of D for the honorary degree of Doctor of Music, and is refused that distinction, mainly (as C believes)

through the opposition of Professor E, although C may retort upon E by a malicious article in a newspaper, containing several gross falsehoods, I really believe, and I may say I hope, and even surmise, that C, even if he had the chance, would not exactly poison E with strychnine. And I may say that I firmly believe, from the little I have seen of C's writings (by which alone I know him), that nothing would induce C to poison E, if C were entirely assured that if he poisoned E, he (C) would infallibly be detected and hanged. But we are cautious now, and, through various circumstances, our claws have been cut short. It was different long ago. Of course we all know how, in the old days, insult or injury was often wiped out in blood; how it was a step in advance even to establish the stern principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe." For *that* principle made sure that the retaliation should at least not exceed the first offence; while formerly, and even afterwards, where that principle was not recognized, very fanciful offences and very small injuries sometimes resulted in the quenching of many lives, in the carrying fire and sword over great tracts of country, and in the perpetuating of bloody feuds between whole tribes for age after age. You know that there have been countries and times in which revenge was organized into a scientific art; in which the terrible *vendetta*, proclaimed between families, was maintained through successive centuries, till one or the other was utterly extinguished, and a regularly kept record preserved the story how this and the other member of the proscribed race had been ruined, or impris-

oned in a hopeless dungeon, or by false testimony brought within the grasp of cruel laws, or directly murdered outright by some one of the race to which was committed the task of vengeance. You know how the dying father has, with his latest breath, charged his son to devote himself to the destruction of the clan that lived beyond the hill or across the river, because of some old offence whose history was almost forgot ; you know how the Campbell and the Macgregor, the Maxwell and the Johnstone, the Chattan and the Quhele—in Scotland—were hereditary foes, and how, in many other instances, the very infant was born into his ancestors' quarrel. You have heard how a dying man, told by the minister of religion that now he must forgive every enemy as he himself hoped to be forgiven, has said to his surviving child, "Well, *I* must forgive such a one, but my curse be upon you if *you* do!" I am not going to give you an historical view, or anything like an historical view, of a miserable subject, but every reader knows well that there is not a blacker nor more deplorable page in the history of human kind than that which tells us how faithfully, how unsparingly, how bloodily, the great principle of returning evil for evil has been carried out by human beings ; the great rule, not of doing to others as you would that they should do to you, but of doing to others as they have done to you, or perhaps as you think they would do to you if they had the chance ; in short, the great fundamental principle of universal application, set out in the words of my little friend with the inchoate black eye, "I have a right to hit him, because he hit *me* first!"

Now, all this kind of thing is what I mean by **THE WRONG TACK.**

My friendly reader, there is another way of meeting injury and unkindness, and a better way. The natural thing, unquestionably, is to return evil for evil. The Christian thing, and the better way, is to "overcome evil with good." There was a certain Great Teacher, who was infinitely more than a Great Teacher, who taught all who should be His followers till the end of time, that the right thing would always be to meet unkindness with kindness; to forgive men their trespasses as we hope our Heavenly Father will forgive ours; to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us, — if such people be. And an eminent philosopher, whom some people would probably appreciate more highly if he had not been also an inspired apostle, spoke not unworthily of his Divine Master when he said, "Recompense to no man evil for evil; dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Now, all this kind of thing is what I mean by **THE RIGHT TACK.**

There is no need at all to try formally to define what is intended by the Right Tack. Everyone knows all about it, and its meaning will become plainer as we go on. Of course, the general idea is, that we should try to meet unkindness with kindness; unfairness with fairness; a bad word with a good one. The general idea is this: Such a neighbor or acquaintance has spoken of you unhandsomely, has treated you unjustly. Well, you determine that you will not go and make yourself as bad as he is, and carry on the quarrel, and increase the

bad feeling that already exists, by trying to retort in kind, — by saying a bad word about *him*, or by doing *him* an unfriendly turn. No, you resolve to go upon another tack entirely. You will treat the person with scrupulous fairness. You try to think kindly of him, and to discover some excuse for his conduct towards you; and if an opportunity occurs of doing him a kind turn, you do it, frankly and heartily. Let me say, that if you try, in a fair spirit and in a kind spirit, to discover some excuse for the bad way in which that person has treated you, or spoken of you, you will seldom have much difficulty in doing so. You will easily think of some little provocation you gave him, very likely without in the least intending it; you will easily see that your neighbor was speaking or acting under some misconception or mistake; you will easily enough think of many little things in his condition — painful, mortifying, anxious things — which may well be taken as some excuse for worse words and doings than ever proceeded from him concerning you. Ah, my brother, most people in these days, if you did but know all their condition, all about their families and their circumstances, have so many causes of disquiet and anxiety and irritation to fever the weary heart and to shake the shaken nerves, that a wise and good man will never make them offenders for a hasty word, or even for an uncharitable suspicion or an unkind deed, very likely hardly said or done till it was bitterly repented. My friend Smith, who is one of the best of men, was one day startled, attending a meeting of a certain senatorial body, to hear Mr. Jones get up and make a speech in the nature of a most vicious attack upon Smith. Smith listened atten-

tively to a few paragraphs, and then, turning to the man next to him, put the following question: "I say, Brown, is not that poor fellow's stomach often very much out of order?" — "He suffers from it horribly," was the true reply. "Ah, that's it, poor fellow," said Smith; "I see what it is that is exacerbating his temper and making him talk in that way." And when Jones sat down, Smith got up with a kindly face, — I don't mean with a provokingly benevolent and forgiving look, — and in a simple, earnest way, justified the conduct which had been attacked in a manner which conveyed that he was really anxious that Jones should think well of him, — all this without the slightest complaint of Jones's bitterness, or the least reference to it. Smith had only done Jones justice in all this. He had done no more than allow for something which ought to be allowed for, and Jones was fairly beaten. After the meeting he went to Smith and asked his pardon, saying that he really had been feeling so ill that he did not know very well what he was saying. Smith shook hands with poor Jones in a way that warmed Jones's heart, and they were better friends than ever from that day forward. But in the lot of many a man there are worse things than little physical uneasinesses, for which a wise man will always allow in estimating an offence given. Yes, there are people with so much to embitter them, — poor fellows so sadly disappointed, — clever, sensitive men so terribly misplaced, so grievously tried, with their keenly sensitive nature so daily rasped, so horribly blistered by coarse, uncongenial natures and by unhappy circumstances, — that I am not afraid to say that a truly good man, if such a poor fellow pitched into him ever so bitterly, or did anything short

of hitting him over the head with a more than commonly thick stick, would do no more than beg the poor fellow's pardon.

But mind, too, my friend, that all this kindly way of judging your fellow-creatures — all this returning of good for evil — must be a real thing, and not a pretence. It must not be a hypocritical varnishing over of a deep, angry, and bitter feeling within us. It must not be something done with the purpose of putting our neighbor still further and still more conspicuously in the wrong. And far less must it consist in mere words with no real meaning. Neither must it consist, as it sometimes in fact does, in saying of an offending neighbor, "I bear him no malice; I forgive him heartily; I make no evil return for his infamous conduct towards me"; when in truth, in the very words of forgiveness, you have said of your offending neighbor just the very worst you could say. You may remember certain lines which appeared in a London newspaper several years since, which purported to be a free translation into rhyme of a speech made in the House of Peers by an eminent bishop. In that speech the blameless prelate spoke of a certain order of men whose tastes were very offensive to him. He said they

" . . . Were the vilest race  
That ever in earth or hell had place.  
He would not prejudice them: no, not he;  
For his soul o'erflowed with charity.  
Incarnate fiends, he would not condemn;  
No, God forbid he should slander them.  
Foul swine, their lordships must confess  
He used them with Christian gentleness.  
He hated all show of persecution,—  
But why were n't they sent to execution? "

I have no doubt whatever that these lines (which form part of a considerable poem) are an extreme exaggeration of what the bishop did actually say; yet I have just as little doubt that in his speech the bishop did exhibit something of that tone. For I have known human beings, not a few, who diligently endeavored to combine the forgiving of a man with the pitching into him just as hard as they conveniently could. Now, that will not do. You must make your choice. You cannot at the same time have the satisfaction of wreaking your vengeance upon one who has injured you, and likewise the magnanimous pleasure of thinking that you have Christianly forgiven him. Your returning of good for evil must be a real thing. It must be done heartily, and without reservation in your own mind, or it is nothing at all. Uriah Heep, in Mr. Dickens's beautiful story, forgave David Copperfield for striking him a blow. But Uriah Heep never did anything more vicious, more thoroughly malignant, than that hypocritical act. But it was vicious and malignant, just because it was hypocritical. In matters like this, sincerity is the touchstone.

I suppose most readers will agree with me when I say that I know no Christian duty which is so grievously neglected by people claiming to be extremely good. There is no mistake whatever as to what is the Christian way of meeting an unkindness or an unfriendly act; it is very desirable that professing Christians had more faith in its efficiency! It would be well if we could all heartily believe, and act upon the belief, that our Maker knows and advises the right and happy way of meeting a bad turn when it may be done to us, how-

ever naturally our own hearts may suggest a very different way! But I fear that our experience of life has convinced most of us, that this duty of returning good for evil is one that is very commonly and very thoroughly shelved. A great many people set it aside, as something all very good and proper, very fit for the Bible to recommend, setting up (as the Bible of course ought to do) a perfect ideal, but as something that *will not work*. We have all a little of that feeling latent in us. And here and there you may find a human being, perhaps a person of an exceedingly loud and ostentatious religious profession, who is so touchy, so ready to take offence, and then so vindictive and unsparing in following up the man that gave it, and in retaliating by word and deed, — by abusive speeches and malicious writings and ill-set demeanor generally, — that it is extremely plain that, though that man might sympathetically shake his head if he were told to “overcome evil with good,” and accept *that* as a noble precept, still his real motto ought rather to be that simple and compendious rule of life, “I will hit you if you hit me!”

I am going to point out certain reasons which make me call the rule of meeting evil with good *the Right Tack*, and the rule of meeting evil with evil *the Wrong Tack*. For one thing, the Right Tack is the effectual way. What the second thing is I don't choose to tell you till you arrive at it in the regular course of diligently reading these pages. Let there be no skipping. So, for one thing at a time, the Right Tack is the effectual thing.

Of course, the natural impulse is to return a blow, and to resent an injury or insult. *That* is the first thing

that we are ready to do. We do that almost instinctively, certainly with little previous reflection. And a brute does *that* just as naturally as a man. It is nothing to boast of that you stand on the same level as a vicious horse, or a savage bulldog, or an angry hornet. But then, *that* does not *overcome* the evil. No, it perpetuates and increases it. It provokes a rejoinder in kind ; *that* provokes another, and thus the mischief grows, till from a small offence at the beginning, vast and comprehensive sin and misery have arisen. But go on the other tack, and you will soon see, from the little child at play up to the worn man with his long experience of this world, how the soft answer turns away wrath, and the kind and good deed beats the evil. There is a beautiful little tract called *The Man that killed his Neighbors*, which sets forth how a good man, coming to a cantankerous district, by pure force of persevering and hearty kindness, fairly killed various unfriendly neighbors, who met him with many unfriendly acts. He killed the enemy ; that is, he did not kill the individual man, but the enemy was altogether annihilated, and the individual man continued to exist as a fast friend. There is something left in average human nature even yet, which makes it very hard indeed to go on doing ill to a man who goes on showing kindness to you. You may get that tract for twopence ; go and pay your twopence, and (after finishing this essay) read that tract. No doubt there is so much that is mean and unworthy in some hearts, and people so naturally judge others by themselves, that there may be found those who cannot understand this returning of good for evil, who will suspect there is something wrong lurking under it, and who will

not believe that it is all sincere and hearty. And an honest and forgiving heart has felt it as a to have its good intentions so misconceived. My Green once wrote an article in a magazine. In tain brilliant weekly periodical there appeared a of that article, finding fault with it. And a we two after, in another article in the magazine, Gre a good-natured way, replied to the notice in the w periodical, and while defending himself in so far, s ted candidly that there was a good deal of truth strictures of the weekly periodical. Green did all just as bears and lions growl and fight, because "his nature too," it cost him no effort; and assu there was no hypocritical affectation in what he did felt no bitterness, and so he showed none. He amused by the clever attack upon him, and showe he was amused. Some time after this, I read a natured notice of Green in a newspaper, in v among his other misdoings, there was reckoned u rejoinder to the brilliant weekly periodical. H likened to Uriah Heep, already mentioned; he w cused of hypocrisy, of arrogant humility, and the Of course it was manifest to all who knew Greer his assailant knew as much about Green's charact he does about the unexplored tracts of Central A But a mean-spirited man cannot even understand s erous one; and the assailant could not find it in hi to believe that Green was a frank, honest man, w out of the frankness of an un-suspecting heart. and Y were once attacked in print by Z. X ther cut Z. Y remained on friendly terms with Z, a viously. Y pointed out to X that it is foolish to q

with a man for attacking you, even severely, upon properly critical grounds. Y further said that he would never quarrel with a man who attacked him even in the most unfair way; that he would treat the attacking party with kindness, and try to show him that his unfavorable estimate was a mistaken one. "Ah!" replied X, "you are scheming to get Z to puff you!" To meet evil with good, X plainly thought, is a thing that could not be done in good faith, and just because it is the right thing to do. There must be some underhand, unworthy motive; and the greatest obstacle that you are likely to find, in habitually meeting evil with good, will be the misconstruction of your conduct by some of the people that know you. No doubt Uriah Heep himself and all his relatives will be ready to represent that you are a humbug and a sneak. Well, it is a great pity; but you cannot help *that*. Go on still on *the Right Tack*, and by and by it will come to be understood that you go upon it in all honesty and truth, and with no sinister nor underhand purpose. And when this comes to be understood, then the evil in almost every case will be overcome, and that effectually. No human being, unless some quite exceptionally hardened reprobate, will long go on doing ill to another who only and habitually returns good for it.

This is not an essay for Sunday reading: it is meant to be quietly read over upon the evening of any day from Monday till Saturday inclusive. But that is no reason why I should not say to you, my friend, that you and I ought to bring the whole force of our Christian life and principle to bear upon this point. Let us determine that, by the help of God's Holy Spirit, without

## CONCERNING THE RIGHT TACK.

whom we can do nothing as we ought, we shall faithfully go upon the right tack through all the little ruffles and offences of daily life. If the sharp retort comes to your lips, remember that it touches the momentous question whether you are a Christian at all, or not, that you hold that sharp word back, and say a kind one. If Mr. A. or Miss B. (a poor old maid, soured a good deal by a tolerably bitter life) speak unkindly of you, or do you some little injustice, say a good word or do a good deed to either of them in return. Pray for God's grace to help you habitually to do all *that*. It will not be easy to do all *that* at the first; but it will always grow easier the longer you try it. It will grow easier, because cause the resolution to go on the right tack will gain strength by habit. And it will grow easier too, because when those around you know that you honestly take Christ's own way of returning an injury, not many will have the heart to injure you: very few will injure you twice. I have the firmest belief, that the true system of mental philosophy is that which is implied in the New Testament; and that there never was any one who knew so well the kind of thing that would suit the whole constitution of man, and the whole system of the universe, as He who made them both.

One case is worth many reasonings. Let me relate a true story. Not many years since there was in Mevania a Christian merchant; of great wealth, and the Right Spirit in him. A neighboring trader did not know much about the Christian merchant, and published a calumnious pamphlet about him. The Christian merchant read it: it was very abusive and and malicious. In point of style it was somewhat

the little document which contains the articles about *Good Words* which appeared in a newspaper called *Christian Charity*. The Christian merchant, I repeat, read the pamphlet. All he said was, that the man who wrote it would be sorry for it some day. This was told the libellous trader, who replied that he would take care that the Christian merchant should never have the chance of hurting him. But men in trade cannot always decide who their creditors shall be; and in a few months the trader became a bankrupt, and the Christian merchant was his chief creditor. The poor man sought to make some arrangement that would let him work for his children again. But every one told him that this was impossible without the consent of Mr. Grant. That was the Christian merchant's honored name. "I need not go to *him*," the poor bankrupt said; "I can expect no favor from *him*." — "Try him," said somebody who knew the good man better. So the bankrupt went to Mr. Grant, and told his sad story of heavy losses, and of heartless work and sore anxiety and privation, and asked Mr. Grant's signature to a paper already signed by the others to whom he was indebted. "Give me the paper," said Mr. Grant, sitting down at his desk. It was given, and the good man, as he glanced over it, said, "You wrote a pamphlet about me once;" and, without waiting a reply, handed back the paper, having written something upon it. The poor bankrupt expected to find *libeller* or *slanderer*, or something like that written. But no: there it was, fair and plain, the signature that was needed to give him another chance in life. "I said you would be sorry for writing that pamphlet," the good man went on. "I did not

mean it as a threat. I meant that some day you would know me better, and see that I did not deserve to be attacked in that way. And now," said the good man, "tell me all about your prospects; and especially tell me how your wife and children are faring." The poor trader told him, that to partly meet his debts he had given up everything he had in the world; and that for many days they had hardly had bread to eat. "That will never do," said the Christian merchant, putting in the poor man's hand money enough to support the pinched wife and children for many weeks. "This will last for a little, and you shall have more when it is gone; and I shall find some way to help you, and by God's blessing you will do beautifully yet. Don't lose heart: I'll stand by you!" I suppose I need not tell you that the poor man's full heart fairly overflowed, and he went away crying like a child. Yes, the Right Tack is the effectual thing! To meet evil with good fairly beats the evil, and puts it down. The poor debtor was set on his feet again: the hungry little children were fed. And the trader never published an attack upon that good man again as long as he lived. And among the good man's multitude of friends, as he grew old among all the things that should accompany old age, there was not a truer or heartier one than the old enemy thus fairly beaten! Yes, my reader: let us go upon the Right Tack!

And now for the other reason I promised to give you why I call all this the Right Tack. It is not merely the most effectual thing; it is the happiest thing. You will feel jolly (to use a powerful and classical expres-

sion) when, in spite of strong temptation to take the other way, you resolutely go on the right tack. I suppose that when the poor trader already named went away with his full heart, feeling himself a different man from what he had been when he entered the merchant's room, and hastening home to tell his wife and children that he had found God's kind angel in the shape of a white-haired old gentleman in a snuff-colored suit, and wearing gaiters,—I suppose there would not be many happier men in this world than that truly Christian merchant prince. He was very much accustomed, indeed, to the peculiar feeling of a man who has returned good for evil; but this feeling is one which no familiarity can bring into contempt. But suppose Mr. Grant had gone on the other tack; said, "You libelled me once, it is my turn now; you shall smart for it." I don't think any of us would envy him his malignant satisfaction. And when he went home that night to his grand house, and enjoyed all the advantages which came of his great wealth, I don't think he would relish them more for thinking of the bare home where the poor debtor had gone, with his last hopes crushed, and for thinking of the little hungry children,—of little Tom sobbing himself to sleep without any supper,—of little Mary, somewhat older, saying with her thin, white face, that she did not want any. At least, if he *had* found happiness in all this, most human beings, with human hearts, would class him with devils, rather than with men. Give me Lucifer at once, with horns and hoofs, rather than the rancorous old villain in the snuff-colored suit!

It causes suffering to ordinary human beings to be

involved in strife. It is a dull, rankling pain. It has a cross-influence on all you do. And reading your Bible, and praying to God, it will often come across you with a sad sense of self-accusing. You will not be able to entirely acquit yourself of blame. You will feel that all this is not very consistent with your Christian profession, with your seasons at the communion-table, with your prayers for forgiveness as you hope to be forgiven, with the remembrance that in a little while you must lay down your weary head and die. The man who has dealt another a stinging blow in return for some injury, the man who has made an exceedingly clever and bitter retort, in speech or in writing, may feel a certain complacency, thinking how well he has done it, and what vexation he has probably caused to a fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer. But he cannot be happy. He *cannot* ! He cannot know the real glow of heart that you will feel, my reader, when God's blessed Spirit has helped you with all your heart to do something kind and good to an offending brother. Yes, it is the greatest luxury in which a human being can indulge himself, the luxury of going upon the Right Tack when you are strongly tempted to go upon the Wrong !

I must speak seriously. I cannot help it. All this is unutterably important, and I cannot leave you, my friend, with any show of lightness in speaking about it. All this is of the very essence of our religion ; it goes to the great question, whether or not we are Christian people at all ; it touches the very ground of our acceptance with God, and the pardon of our manifold sins. There are certain words never to be forgotten : " If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will

also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Yes, the taint of rankling malice in our hearts, when we go to God and ask for pardoning mercy, will turn our prayers into an imprecation for wrath. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"; forgive us our sin against Thee, just as much as we forgive other men their offences against us; that is, not at all! Think of the unforgiving man or woman who returns evil for evil going to God with *that* prayer! I cannot say how glad and thankful I should be if I thought that all this I have been writing would really influence some of those who may read this page to resolve, by God's grace, that when they are daily tempted to little resentments by little offences,—and it is only by these that most Christians in actual life are tried,—they will habitually go on the Right Tack! But remember, my friend, that nothing you have read is more real and practical,—nothing bears more directly upon the interests of the life we are daily leading, with all its little worries, trials, and cares,—than what I say now, that it is only by the help and grace of the Holy Spirit of God that you can ever thoroughly and effectually do what I mean by going upon the Right Tack. A calm and kindly temperament is good; a disposition to see what may be said in defence of such as offend you is good; and doubtless these are helps, but something far more and higher is needed. There must be a loftier and more excellent inspiration than that of the calm head and the kind heart. You will never do anything rightly, never anything steadfastly, that goes against the grain of human nature, except by the grace of that Blessed One who

makes us new creatures in Christ. There will be something that will not *ring sound* about all that meeting evil with good, which does not proceed from the new heart, and the right spirit sanctified of God.

Now, let there be no misunderstanding of all this, and no pushing it into an extreme opposed to common sense. All this that has been said has been said concerning the little offences of daily life. As regards these, I believe that what I have called the Right Tack is the effectual thing and the happy thing. But I am no advocate of the principle of non-resistance. I am no member of the Peace Society. I have no wish to see Britain disband her armies, and dismantle her navy, and lie as a helpless prey at the mercy of any tyrant or invader. No: I should wish our country's claws to be sharp and strong; *that* is the way to prevent the need for their use from arising. I should, with regret, but without conscientious scruple, shoot a burglar who intended to murder me. I heartily approve the blowing of a rebel sepoy away from a cannon. And though the punishment of death, as inflicted in this country, is a miserable necessity, still I believe it is a necessity, and a thing morally right, in almost every case in which it is inflicted. All that has been said about the returning of good for evil is to be read in the light of common sense. There are bad people whom you cannot tame or put down, except by the severe hand of Justice. And in taming them in the only possible way you are doing nothing inconsistent with the views set forth in these pages. It would take too much time to argue the matter fully out; and it is really needless. A wrong-headed man, a member of the Peace Society, has pub-

lished a pamphlet in which he frankly tells us that if he and his wife and children were about to be murdered by a burglar, and if there was no possibility of preventing this murdering except by killing the burglar, then it would be the duty of a Christian to die as a martyr to his principles, and peaceably allow the burglar to murder him and his family. Really there is nothing to be said in reply to such a puzzle-head, except that I would just as soon believe that black is white as that *that* is a Christian duty. There are exceptional human beings who are really wild beasts, and who must be treated precisely as a savage wild beast should be treated. And even in the matter of injuries of a less decided character than the murdering of yourself, your wife, and children, it is as plain as need be that a wise and good man may very fitly defend himself against the aggression of a ruffian. When Mr. Macpherson threatened to thrash Dr. Johnson for expressing doubts as to the genuineness of Ossian, Dr. Johnson was quite right to provide a stick of great size and weight, and to carry it about with him for the purpose of self-defence. And while desirous to obey the spirit of the Saviour's command, there are few things of which I feel more certain, than that if a blackguard struck my good friend Dr. A on the right cheek, the blameless divine would not turn the other also. Nor need we make the least objection to the motto of a certain Northern country, which conveys that people had better be careful how they do that country any wrong, inasmuch as that country won't stand it. There is nothing amiss in the "*Nemo me impune lacesset.*" Don't meddle with us; we have not the least wish to meddle with you.



## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCERNING NEEDLESS FEARS.

**A**T the present moment I feel very uncomfortable ; not physically, but mentally and morally. And I do not know why. What I mean is, that a little ago some disagreeable thought was presented to my mind which put me quite out of sorts. And though I have forgot what the disagreeable thought was, its effect remains, and I still feel out of sorts. I am aware of a certain moral aching which I cannot refer to its cause. I suppose, my reader, you have often felt the like. You have been conscious of a certain gloom, depression, bewilderment, — not remembering what it was that started it. But after a little time it suddenly flashes on you, and you remember the whole thing.

I can imagine a man going to be hanged, waking up on the fatal morning with a dull aching sense of something wrong, he does not know what, till all at once the dreadful reality glares upon him. Some of us have had the experience, as little boys, when coming back to consciousness on the morning of the day we had to return to school, far away from home. In certain cases, return-

ing to school is to a boy not many degrees less unendurable than being hanged is to a man. Of course there is no remorse in the case of the little schoolboy, and here is a discrepancy between the cases suggested. But indeed it is vain to estimate the relative crushing powers of two great trials. Each at the time is just as much as one can bear.

But (to go back a little) just as a strong hand, seven hundred years since, set a large stone in its place in a cathedral wall, and the stone remains there to-day, though the hand that placed it is gone and forgot, in like manner some painful reflection jars the human mind and puts it out of joint, and it remains jarred and out of joint after the painful reflection has passed away. A cloud passes between us and the sun, and a sudden gloom and chill fall upon all things. But, strange to say, in the moral world, after the cloud that brought the gloom and chill has passed, the gloom and chill remain. And thus a human being may feel very uncomfortable, and know that he has good reason for being uncomfortable, yet not know what the reason is. If you receive ten letters before breakfast, you open them all and read them hastily. It is very likely that one of the ten contains some rather disagreeable communication. You forget, in a minute, as you skim the newspaper and take your breakfast, what that disagreeable communication was; yet still you take your breakfast with a certain weight upon your spirits, with a certain vague sense of something amiss.

What is it that is wrong this Saturday evening at 9.10 P. M.? Nothing is wrong physically. Too thankful would this writer be if he could but be assured that

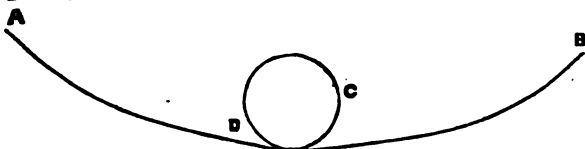
on all the Saturday evenings of his life he would be as happily placed as he is now. To-morrow he is to preach at his own church, and during the week all but gone he hath prepared two new discourses to be preached on that day. Indurated must be that man's conscience, or very lightly must that man take his work, who does not feel a certain glow of satisfaction on the Saturday evening of a week wherein he has prepared two new discourses. You remark, I don't say two new sermons. No sensible mortal can prepare, or would try to prepare, two new sermons in one week. But he may prepare one sermon and one lecture, which (being added one to the other) will be found to amount to two discourses. But any one who knows the long and hard work which goes to the production of a sermon which people may be expected to listen to, will feel, as he sews up his manuscript, the peculiar satisfaction which attends the contemplation of "something attempted, something done."

Yes, I remember now. Something I thought of this morning has come with me all the day, making me feel gloomy even while forgetting what it was. You know how a severe sting from a nettle leaves behind it a certain starting pain, hours after the first heat of the sting is gone. So it was here. And in this, too, is a point of difference between the material and moral world. In the material world, if a table stands on three legs, and you in succession saw off the three legs, the table goes down. But in the moral world (especially in the case of old women), if a belief or a feeling founds upon three reasons (or legs), though you in succession take away those reasons, the table often still stands as before.

The physical table cannot do without legs. The moral table often stands firmest when it has no legs whatever. The beliefs which men often hold most resolutely are those for which not merely they can give no reason, but for which no reason could be given by anybody.

I was thinking of the fears which eat the heart out of so many lives. And this was my reflection.

When I was a boy, there was exhibited in London what was called a Centrifugal Railway. Let me request you earnestly to attend to the subjoined diagram.



The line A D C B represents the Centrifugal Railway. You started from the point A in a little carriage. It acquired a very great velocity in running down the descent from A to D; a velocity so great that it ran right round the circle C, turning the passenger with his head downwards, and finally got safely to B. At the point B the passenger got out, and if he were a person of sense (which, under the circumstances, was by no means probable), he resolved never to travel by the Centrifugal Railway any more.

Now, you observe that in turning the circle C the passenger was in a very critical position. He had good reason to be thankful when the circle was fairly turned, and he had, with unbroken bones, reached B. And it struck me, that all our life here is like the circle C on the Centrifugal Railway. I shall be able to think differently in a day or two, more hopefully and cheerfully;

but it was borne in upon me that after all, my friends, we are doing no more in this life than getting round the circle C; and that there are so many risks in the way, that we may be very glad and thankful when it is done. He was a wise man in former days who said (let me translate his words into my peculiar idiom), "I call no man happy before he has got round the circle C." And desponding times will come to all, in which they will think of the innumerable sad possibilities which hang over them, and the sorrowful certainties which are daily drawing nearer, and the dangers of getting off the line altogether and going to destruction. I look ahead, many a one will sometimes be disposed to say, and there are many, many things which I know may go wrong. O, I would be thankful if I and those dear to me were safely round the circle C, and had got safely to the point B; even though some people shrink from that latter point as long as they possibly can.

Of course, this is a gloomy kind of view; but such views will sometimes push themselves upon one, and will not be put off. I hope it will go away shortly. It will go away all the sooner for my having made you partaker of it. I have in my mind an abstract eidolon, an image of the reader of this page, who is my confidential friend. To him I have told very many things which I have hardly ever told to any one else. And I want him to take his share of this vexatious view about the circle C, that so it may lie lighter on myself. All this life, of push, struggle, privation, trickery, getting on, failure; all this life, in which one man becomes chancellor, and another prime minister, and another a weary careworn drudge, and another a self-satisfied

blockhead, and another a poor needlewoman laboring eighteen hours a day for a few pence ; all this life, of kings and priests and statesmen, of cripples and beggars, of joyful hearts and sorrowful hearts, of scheming and working, as if there were no other world, — is no more than our getting round the circle C. We are cast on that incline that begins from A, at our birth ; and our business is to get safely to B.

Every day that dawns upon many people is a little circle C. In the morning they are aware that various things may go wrong in it ; and of course they do not know what the day may bring forth. We are environed by many unknown dangers ; and any day we may say the hasty word, or do the foolish thing, which may involve us in great trouble. Even the most sagacious and prudent man may some day be taken off his guard. And the accidents which may befall us are quite innumerable. It is a wonder we have got on so far in life as we have, so little battered by the chances of the way. You know some one who went out from his own home on a frosty day, and in three minutes came back pale and fainting, having fallen and fractured his wrist. The pain was great ; and the seclusion from work was absolute for a while. What could we do if the like happened to us ? Some one else thought but one step of a stair remained for him to descend, while in fact there were two ; and the consequences of that misapprehension remained with him painfully to the end of his life. And thus, looking back on last year, one feels it was a most protracted and perilous circle C. It was made up of days, each of which might have brought we know not what with it. We have got

safely round that circle, indeed ; but at the beginning we were not sure that we should. If we could have had such an assurance it would have spared us many fears. These fears are for the most part forgot when we look back, and feel how needless they were. But they were very real things at the time they were felt, and they were a terrible drawback from the pleasures of anticipation and of actual fact. When you look back on a few weeks or months of foreign travel, the whole thing has a fixed and certain look, — the thing that has been is a thing for ever. But what a shifting tract of shadows it was when you were looking forward to it, and a tract not without several alarming spectres vaguely stalking about over it. Now we know that we got safely back, but when we started we did not know that we should. It was like leaving the point A, and flying round the circle C ; whereas now we have reached the point B, and we have forgot our emotions in actually flying round the circle.

Two or three days ago, three friends of the writer sailed from Southampton, on their way to Egypt and the Holy Land. They are to be away three months. They are experienced travellers, and have seen very many cities and men, and doubtless they started with no feelings but those of pleasurable anticipation. When I heard of their going my first feeling was one of envy. How delightful to cast aside all this perpetual toil that overtakes one's strength, and keeps one ever on the stretch, and have three months for the mind to regain its elasticity, much diminished by its being kept always bent ! And then, what strange, unfelt moods of thought and feeling one would experience when surrounded by the scenes

and associations of those tracts of this world! You would accumulate store of new ideas and remembrances; and in the first sermons and essays you would write after returning, you would be (in a moral sense) curvetting about like a young colt in a pasture, and not plodding like an old steady hack along the highway! But when I tried to put myself (in fancy) in the place of my friends; when I thought of the long, unknown way, and of the unsettled tribes of men; when I thought of Mr. Buckle at Damascus; when I thought of possible fevers and of most certain bugs; when I thought how when human beings go to the East for three months, they may chance never to come back at all, — then to a quiet, stay-at-home person, who has seen hardly anything, the circle C appeared invested with many grounds of alarm; and I was reconciled to the fact that I was not stepping on board the *Ellora* amid a great roar of escaping steam, nor going down to the choky little berth, and surveying my belongings there. Thus did I repress the rising envy in my breast. But when my friends come back again, portentous images with huge beards; when they have made the Nile, and Olivet, and Gethsemane, and the Dead Sea, a possession for as long as memory serves them; when they have got fairly and triumphantly round the circle C, and happily reached the point of safety B, — then, I fear, the envious feeling will recur.

O, if we could but get quit of our needless fears! Of those fears (that is) which take so much from the enjoyment of life, and which the result proves to have been quite groundless!

Some folk, with very robust nervous systems, prob-

ably know but little of these. But from large experience of my fellow-creatures, rich and poor, and from careful investigation of their features, I begin to conclude that such fears are very common things. Most middle-aged faces have an anxious look. You can see, even when they bear a cheerful expression, that they are capable in a moment of taking that painful aspect of anxiety and apprehension. I do not mean by fear the indulgence of physical cowardice; happily few of the race that inhabits Britain will, on emergency, prove deficient in physical pluck. But I mean that most middle-aged people, who have children, are somewhat cowed by the unknown Future; and that the too ready imagination can picture out a hundred things that may go wrong. *Anxius vixi*, wrote the man in the Middle Ages; and anxious we live yet, and probably always will live, in this world.

“ If you go out in the dark expecting to see a ghost, you will very likely take a white sheet hung on a hedge for one. And even so, people in their feverish state of apprehension sometimes are dreadfully frightened by things which in a calmer mood they would discern had nothing alarming about them. Every one is sharp enough to see this in the case of other people. You will find a man who will say to you, “ What a goose Smith is to worry himself about that table-cloth on the holly, and declare it is an apparition, and that it has bad news for him”; and in a few minutes you will be aware that the man who says all this is furtively looking over his shoulder at a white donkey feeding under a thick hedge, and dreading that it is a polar bear about to devour him.

It is curious to think how often these needless fears,

which cause so much unnecessary anxiety and misery, are the result of pure miscalculation, and this miscalculation not made in a hurry, but deliberately. I have a friend who told me this:—When he was married, he had exactly £500 a year, and no means of adding to that income. So as he could not increase his income, his business was to keep down his expenditure below it. But neither he nor his wife knew much about household management; and (as he afterwards found) he was a good deal victimized by his servants. After doing all he could to economize, he found, at the end of the third month of his financial year, that he had spent exactly £125. Four times £125, he calculated, made £600 a year, which was just £100 more than he had got; so the debtor's prison appeared to loom in view, or some total change in his mode of life, which it seemed almost impossible for him to make, without very painful circumstances; and, for weeks, the thought almost drove him distracted. Day and night it never was absent. At length, one day, brooding over his prospects, he suddenly discovered that four times 125 make just 500, and not 600; so that all his fears were groundless. He was relieved, he told me; but somehow his heart had been so burdened and sunk by those anxious weeks, that though the cause of anxiety was removed, it was a long time before it seemed to recover its spring.

Now my friend had all his wits about him. There was nothing whatever of that causeless delusion which shades off into insanity. But somehow he thought that  $125 \times 4 = 600$ ; and his conclusion was that ruin stared him in the face.

I have heard of a more touching case. A certain

man brought to a friend a sum of money, rather less than a hundred pounds, and asked the friend to keep it for him. He said it was all he had in the world, and that he did not know what he was to do when it was gone. He had been a quite rich man; but one of those swindling institutions whose directors ought to be hung, and are not, had involved him in great money responsibilities by its downfall. In a few days after leaving the money with his friend, the poor man committed suicide. Then his affairs were examined by competent persons; and it was found that after meeting all possible liabilities, he had been worth several hundreds a year. But the poor fellow had miscalculated; and here was the tragic consequence.

No doubt, he had been so terribly apprehensive, that he had been afraid to make a thorough examination as to how his affairs stood. Human beings often undergo much needless fear, because they are afraid to search out all the facts. For fear of finding the fact worse than they fear, they often fear what is much worse than the fact. They go on through life thinking they have seen a ghost, and miserable in the thought; whereas, if they had but screwed their courage to the point of examining, they would have found it was no more than a table-cloth drying upon a line between two poles. O, that we could all, forever, get rid of this moral cowardice! If you think there is something the matter with your heart, go to the doctor and let him examine. Probably there is nothing earthly wrong. And even if there be, it is better to know the worst than live on week after week in a vague, wretched fear. Let us do the like with our affairs. Let us do the like with our

religious difficulties, with our theological perplexities. The very worst thing you can do is to lock the closet door when you think probably there is a skeleton within. Fling it wide open ; search with a paraffin lamp into every corner. A hundred to one, there is no skeleton there at all. But from youth to age, we must be battling with the dastardly tendency to walk away from the white donkey in the shadow, which we ought to walk up to. I have seen a little child, who had cut her finger, entreat that it might just be tied up, without ever being looked at ; she was afraid to look at it. But when it *was* looked at, and washed and sorted, she saw how little a thing it was for all the blood that came from it ; and about nine-tenths of her fear fled away.

You have heard of Mr. Elwes, the wealthy miser, frightening a guest by walking into his bedroom during the night, and saying, " Sir, I have just been robbed of seven guineas and a half, which was all I had in the world ! " Here, of course, we enter the domain of proper insanity. For the fears which a man of vast fortune has lest he may die in the workhouse belong essentially to the same class with those of the man who thinks he is glass, and that if he falls he will break ; or who thinks he is butter, and if he goes near the fire he will melt. And though all needless fears are morbid things, which the healthy mind would shake off, yet there is a vast distance between the morbid apprehensions and the morbid depressions of the practically sane man, and the phenomena of the mind which is truly insane.

The truth seems to be, that some people must have a

certain amount of misery ; and it will attach itself to any peg. If not to this, then to another ; but the misery is *due*. And I defy you by any means to lift such people above the slough of their apprehensions. As you remove each cause of alarm, they will fix upon another. First, they fear that their means will not carry them from year's end to year's end. *That* fear proves groundless. Next they fear that though their present income is ample, somehow it will fall off. *That* fear proves groundless. Next, they are in dread as to the provision for their children ; and here, doubtless, most men can find a cause of anxiety that will last them through all their life. But it is their nature to be always imagining something horrible. They live in dread that they may quarrel with some friend, or that some general crash will come some day, they don't know how. And if all other causes of apprehension were absolutely removed, they would make themselves wretched to a suitable degree by fearing lest an earthquake should swallow up Great Britain, or that Dr. Cumming's calculations as to the end of the world may prove true. In short, if a human being be of a nervous, anxious temperament, it is as certain that such a human being will find some peg to hang his fears upon, as it is that a man, who is the possessor of a hat, will find something, wherever he goes, to hang it or lay it upon.

All this seems to be especially true in the case of people who have been heavily tried in youth. Human beings may be subjected to a treatment in their early years that seems to take the hopeful spring out of them. Unless where there is very unusual stamina of mind and body, they never quite get over it. You may damage a

man so that he will never quite get over it, — you may give the youthful mind a wrench whose evil effect will cling to it through all life. There are things in the moral world which are like an injury to the spine, — never recovered from ; but that grows and strengthens with the man's growth and strength ; and no good fortune, no happiness coming afterwards, can ever make amends. The evil has been done, and it cannot be undone.

You have beheld a horse, no more than six years of age, but which is dull and spiritless, and its forelegs somewhat bent and shaky. Why are these things so? It has easy work now, good feeding, kind usage. Yes, but it was driven when too young. It was set to hard work then, and the creature never has got over it and never will. It is too late for any kindness now to make up for the mischief done at three years old.

I am firmly persuaded it is so with many human beings. They had an unhappy home as little boys, the love of the beautiful in nature and art was starved out in them. They were committed to the care of a self-conceited person, utterly devoid of common sense. All mirth was forbidden as something sinful. Life was made hard and savorless. They grew up under a bitter sense of injustice and oppression, and with the conviction that they were hopelessly misunderstood. Or, later, the weight of care came down upon them very heavily. There are many people who, for most of the years between twenty and thirty, never know what a light heart is. And by such things as these the spring of the spirit is broken. A dogged steadfastness of purpose may remain, but the elasticity is gone. The writer has no

knowledge of Mr. Thackeray's character and career except from the accounts of these which have been published since his death by some who knew him well. But it is strongly impressed on one in reading these, that, amid all the success and fame and love of his latter years, a certain tone of melancholy remained, testifying that former days of unappreciated toil, of care, and anxiety, had left a trace that never could go. It is only of a limited and exceptional order of troubles that the memorable words can be spoken with any shade of truth: *Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit*. I do not believe that the memory of pure misery can ever be other than a miserable thing.

If this were a sermon, I should now go on to set forth, at full length, what I esteem to be the best and worthiest means of getting free from those needless fears of which we have been thinking. But in this essay, I pass these briefly by for the present; and proceed to suggest a lesser cure for needless anxiety, which is not without its wholesome effect on some minds.

I believe that when you are worrying yourself by imagining all kinds of evils as likely to befall you, it will do you a great deal of good to be allowed to see something of other people who are always expecting something awful to happen, and with a morbid ingenuity devising ways of making themselves miserable. You will discern how ridiculous such people look; how irritating they are; how, so far from exciting sympathy, they excite indignation. The Spartans were right to make their slaves drunk, and thus to cure their children of the least tendency to the vice of drunkenness, by letting them see how ugly it looks in another. I

request Mr. Snarling to take notice, that when I say the Spartans were right in doing this, I don't mean to say that they did an act which is in a moral sense to be commended or justified. All I mean is, that they took a very effectual means to compass the end they had in view. You never feel the badness of your own faults so keenly as when you see them carried a little further in somebody else. And so a human being, naturally very nervous and evil-foreboding, is corrected, when he sees how absurd it looks in another. My friend Jones told me, that, after several months of extremely hard head-work, which had lowered his nervous system, he found himself getting into a way of vaguely dreading what might come next, and of receiving his letters in the morning with many anticipations of evil. But happily a friend came to visit him, who carried all this about a hundred degrees further, who had come through all his life expecting at least an earthquake daily, if not the end of the world. And Jones was set right. In the words of Wordsworth, "He looked upon him, and was calmed and cheered." Jones saw how like a fool his friend seemed; and there came a healthy reaction; and he opened his letter-box bravely every morning, and was all right again. Yes, let us see the Helot drunk, and it will teach us to keep sober. My friend Gray told me that for some little space he felt a growing tendency to scrubbiness in money matters. But having witnessed pinching and paring (without the least need for them) carried to a transcendent degree by some one else, the very name of economy was made to stink in his nostrils; and he felt a mad desire to pitch half-crowns about the streets wherever he went. In

this case the reaction went too far; but in a week or two Gray came back to the middle course, which is the safest and best.

But, after all, the right and true way of escaping from what Dr. Newman has so happily called "care's unthankful gloom," and of casting off needless fears, lies in a different direction altogether. It was wise advice of Sidney Smith, when he said that those who desire to go hopefully and cheerfully through their work in this life should "take short views"; not plan too far ahead; take the present blessing and be thankful for it. It was indeed the best of all possible advice; for it was but a repetition, in another form, of the counsel of the Kindest and Wisest, "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." There is no doubt whatever that the true origin of all these forebodings of evil is our lack of trust in God. We all bear a far greater burden of anxiety than we need bear, just because we *will* try to bear our burden for ourselves, instead of casting it on a stronger arm. We try to provide for our children and ourselves, forgetting the sure promise to all humble Christian people, that "the Lord will provide." And when we seek to cast off our load of care by the help of those comfortable words of Holy Scripture which invite us to trust everything to God, we try too much to reason ourselves into the assurance that we need not be so care-laden as we are. We forget that the only way in which it is possible for us to believe these words in our heart, and to take the comfort of them, is by heartily asking God that they may be carried home to us with the irresistible

demonstration of the Holy Spirit. How the circle C would lose its fears, if we did but feel, by His gracious teaching, that it is the way which God designed for us, and that He will "keep us in all our ways!" Whenever I see man or woman, early old with anxiety, and with a face deeply lined with care, I think of certain words which deserve infinitely better than to be printed in letters of gold, and I wish that such a one, and that all I care for, were numbered among the people who have a right to take these words for their own:—

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."





## CHAPTER XIII.

### B E A T E N .

**D**O you know this peculiar feeling? I speak to men in middle age.

To be bearing up as manfully as you can; putting a good face on things; trying to persuade yourself that you have done very fairly in life after all; and all of a sudden to feel that merciful self-deception fail you, and just to break down; to own how bitterly beaten and disappointed you are, and what a sad and wretched failure you have made of life?

There is no one in the world we all try so hard to cheat and delude as ourself. How we hoodwink that individual, and try to make him look at things through rose-colored spectacles! Like the poor little girl in Mr. Dickens's touching story, we *make believe very much*. But sometimes we are not able to make believe. The illusion goes. The bare, unvarnished truth forces itself upon us, and we see what miserable little wretches we are; how poor and petty are our ends in life, and what a dull weary round it all is. You remember the poor old half-pay officer, of whom Charles Lamb tells us. *He* was not to be disillusioned. He asked you to

hand him the silver sugar-tongs in so confident a tone, that though your eyes testified that it was but a teaspoon, and that of Britannia metal, a certain spell was cast over your mind. But rely on it, though that half-starved veteran kept up in this way before people, he would often break down when he was alone. It would suddenly rush upon him what a wretched old humbug he was.

Is it sometimes so with all of us? We are none of us half-satisfied with ourselves. We know we are poor creatures, though we try to persuade ourselves that we are tolerably good. At least, if we have any sense, this is so. Yet I greatly envied a man whom I passed in the street yesterday; a stranger, a middle-aged person. His nose was elevated in the air; he had a supercilious demeanor, expressive of superiority to his fellow-creatures, and contempt for them. Perhaps he was a prince, and so entitled to look down on ordinary folk. Perhaps he was a bagman. The few princes I have ever seen had nothing of his uplifted aspect. But what a fine thing it would be to be able always to delude yourself with the belief that you are a great and important person; to be always quite satisfied with yourself and your position. There are people who, while repeating certain words in the litany, feel as if it was a mere form, signifying nothing, to call themselves *miserable sinners*. There are some who say these words sorrowfully from their very heart, feeling that they express God's truth. They know what weak, silly, sinful beings they are; they know what a poor thing they have made of life, with all their hard work, and all their planning and scheming. In fact, they feel beaten, disappointed,

down. The high hopes with which they started are blighted ; were blighted long ago. They think, with a bitter laugh, of their early dreams of eminence, of success, of happiness ; and sometimes, after holding up for a while as well as they could, they feel they can do it no longer. Their heart fails them. They sit down and give up altogether. Great men and good men have done it. It is a comfort to many a poor fellow to think of Elijah, beaten and sick at heart, sitting down under a scrubby bush at evening far in the bare desert, and feeling there was no more left, and that he could bear no more. Thank God that the verse is in the Bible.

“ But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree ; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, It is enough : now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers.”

I thought of Elijah in the wilderness the other night. I saw the great prophet again. For human nature is the same in a great prophet as in a poor little hungry boy.

At nine o’clock on Saturday evening, I heard pitiful, subdued sobs and crying outside. I know the kind of thing that means some one fairly beaten : not angry, not bitter ; smashed. I opened the front door, and found a little boy, ten years old, sitting on the steps, crying. I asked him what was the matter. I see the thin, white, hungry, dirty little face. He would have slunk away, if he could : he plainly thought his case beyond all mending. But I brought him in, and set him on a chair in the lobby, and he told his story. He had a large bundle of sticks in a ragged sack, — firewood. At three

o'clock that afternoon, he had come out to sell them. His mother was a poor washerwoman, in the most wretched part of the town: his father was killed a fortnight ago by falling from a scaffold. He had walked a long way through the streets: about three miles. He had tried all the afternoon to sell his sticks, but had sold only a halfpenny worth. He was lame, poor little man, from a sore leg, but managed to carry his heavy load. But at last, going down some poor area stair in the dark, he fell down a whole flight of steps, and hurt his sore leg so that he could not walk, and also got a great cut on the forehead. He had got just the halfpenny for his poor mother: he had been going about with his burden for six hours, with nothing to eat. But he turned his face homewards, carrying his sticks, and struggled on about a quarter of a mile, and then he broke down. He could go no farther. In the dark cold night he sat down and cried. It was not the crying of one who hoped to attract attention: it was the crying of flat despair.

The first thing I did (which did not take a moment) was to thank God that my door-steps had been his juniper-tree. Then I remembered that the first thing God did when Elijah broke down was to give him something to eat. Yes, it is a great thing to keep up physical nature. And the little man had had no food since three o'clock till nine. So there came, brought by kind hands (not mine), several great slices of bread and butter (jam even was added), and a cup of warm tea. The spirit began to come a little into the child; and he thought he could manage to get home, if we would let him leave his sticks till Monday. We asked him what

he would have got for his sticks if he had sold them all : ninepence. Under the circumstances, it appeared that a profit of a hundred per cent was not exorbitant, so he received eighteen pence, which he stowed away somewhere in his rags, and the sack went away, and returned with all the sticks emptied out. Finally, an old gray coat of rough tweed came, and was put upon the little boy, and carefully buttoned, forming a capital great coat. And forasmuch as his trowsers were most unusually ragged, a pair of such appeared, and being wrapped up were placed in the sack along with a good deal of bread and butter. How the heart of the child had by this time revived ! He thought he could go home nicely. And having very briefly asked the Father of the fatherless to care for him, I beheld him limp away in the dark. All this is supremely little to talk about. But it was quite a different thing to see. To look at the poor starved little face, and the dirty hand like a claw ; to think of ten years old ; to think of one's own children in their warm beds ; to think what all this would have been to one's self as a little child. O, if I had a four-leaved shamrock, what a turn-over there should be in this world !

When the little man went away, I came back to my work. I took up my pen, and tried to write, but I could not. I thought I saw many human beings besides Elijah in the case of that child. I tried to enter into the feeling (it was only too easy) of that poor little thing in his utter despair. It was sad enough to carry about the heavy bundle hour after hour, and to sell only the halfpenny worth. But it was dreadful, after tumbling down the stair, to find he was not able to walk ;

and still to be struggling to carry back his load to his bare home, which was two miles distant from this spot. And at last to sit down in misery on the step in the dark night, stunned. He would have been quite happy if he had got ninepence, God help him. When I was a boy, I remember how a certain person who embittered my life in those days was wont to say, as though it summed up all the virtues, that such a person was a man who looked at both sides of a shilling before spending it. It is such a sight as the little boy on the step that makes one do the like, that helps one to understand the power there is in a shilling. But many human beings, who can give a shilling rather than take it, are as really beaten as the little boy. They too have got their bags, filled with no matter what. Perhaps poetry, perhaps metaphysics, perhaps magazine articles, perhaps sermons. They thought they would find a market, and sell these at a great profit, but they found none. They have fallen down a stair, and broken their leg and bruised their head. And now, in a moral sense, they have sat down in the dark on a step, and, though not crying, are gazing about them blankly.

Perhaps you are one of them.





## CHAPTER XIV.

### GOSSIP.

**W**HO invents the current lies? I suppose a multitude of people give each their little contribution, till the piece of malignant tattle is formed into shape.

There are many people, claiming to be very religious people, who are very willing to repeat a story to the prejudice of some one they know, though they have very little reason to think it true, and have strong suspicions that it is false. There is a lesser number of respectable people, who will positively invent and retail a story to the prejudice of some one they know, being well aware that it is false. In short, most people who repeat ill-natured stories may be arranged in these two classes:—

1. People who lie.
2. People who lie, and know they lie.

The intelligent reader is requested to look upon the words which follow, and then he will be informed about a malicious, vulgar, and horribly stupid piece of gossip:—

MR. AND MRS. GREEN

ALWAYS

DRESS FOR DINNER.

My friend Mr. Green lately told me, that quite by accident he found that in the little country town where he lives, and of which indeed he is the vicar, it had come to be generally reported that in every bedroom in his house a framed and glazed placard was hung above the mantelpiece, bearing the above inscription. Miss Tarte and Mr. Fatuous had eagerly disseminated the rumor, though it was impossible to say who had originated it. Probably Miss Tarte had one day said to Mr. Fatuous that Mr. Green ought to have such a placard so exhibited, and that some day Mr. Green probably would come to have such a placard so exhibited. A few days afterwards Mr. Fatuous said to Miss Tarte that he supposed Mr. Green must have his placards up by this time. And next day, on the strength of that statement, Miss Tarte told a good many people that the placards were actually up. And the statement was willingly received and eagerly repeated by those persons in that town who are always delighted to have something to tell which shows that any one they know has done something silly or bad. At last a friend of Mr. Green's thought it right he should know what Mr. Fatuous and Miss Tarte were saying. And Mr. Green, who is a resolute person, took means to cut these individuals short. My friend has exactly one spare bedroom in his house, and no one who is not an idiot need be told that no such inscription was ever displayed or ever dreamt of in his establishment. Next Sunday Mr. Green preached a sermon from the text, *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor*. And after pointing out that it was unnecessary that the commandment should forbid false witness to the advantage of one's

neighbor, inasmuch as nobody was likely ever to bear *that*, he went on to point out, with great force of argument, that if man or woman habitually told lies to the prejudice of their neighbors, their Christian character might justly be held as an imperfect one, even though they should attend all the week-day services and missionary society meetings within several miles. Mr. Fatuous and Miss Tarte complained that this was very unsound doctrine. And Miss Tarte wrote a letter to the *Record*, in which she stated that the vicar habitually preached the doctrines of Bishop Colenso.

One is most unwilling to believe it, yet I am compelled by the logic of facts to think that malice towards all their fellow-creatures is an essential part of the constitution of many people. All the particles of matter, we know, exert on each other a mutual repulsion. Is it so with the atoms that make up human society? Many people dislike a man just because they know nothing about him. And when they come to know something about him, they are sure to dislike him even more. In a simple state of society, if you disliked a man you would knock him on the head. If an Irishman, you would shoot him from behind a hedge. The modern civilized means of wreaking your wrath on the man you dislike is different. You repeat tattle to his prejudice. You tell lies about him. This is the weapon of warfare in Christian countries. Two things there are the wise man will not trust, if said by various persons we all know : —

1. Anything to their own advantage.
2. Anything to their neighbor's prejudice.

It is a bad sign of human nature, that many men

should have so much to say to the prejudice of any one they know. But it is a much worse sign of human nature that many men should hear with delight, and speak with exaggeration, anything to the prejudice of people whom they know nothing about. The man you know may have given you offence. The man of whom you know nothing cannot possibly have done so ; and if you hate him, and wish to do him harm, it can only be because you are prepared to hate the average specimen of your race. We all know those who, if they met a fellow-creature out in the lonely desert, would see in him not a friend but an enemy, and would prepare to shoot him or hamstring him unobserved. For the people I mean prefer to deal their blow unseen. There are those who, as boys at school, would never have a fair fight with a companion, but would secretly give him a malicious poke when unobserved. And such men, I have remarked, carry out the system when they have reached maturity. They will not boldly face the being they hate, but they secretly disseminate falsehoods to his disadvantage.

But it is sad to think that the hasty judgments men form of one another are almost invariably unfavorable ones. It is sad to think that people come to have such malignant feeling towards other people who are quite unknown to them. A short time ago, at a public meeting, Mr. Jones was proposed as a suitable person to be the town beadle. Jones did not want the beadleship, being already in possession of a preferable situation of the same character. When his name was proposed, an old individual rose to oppose him. That was all natural. But this individual was not content to oppose Jones's claims to the beadleship, he positively gnashed his teeth

in fury at Jones. He had no command of language, and could but imperfectly express his hatred; but he foamed at the mouth, the veins of his head swelled up, and he trembled in every limb with eager wrath, as he declared that he would never consent to Jones being beadle; that if Jones was appointed beadle he himself (his name was Mr. Curre) would forthwith quit the town, and never again enter it. Curre had never exchanged a word with Jones in all his life; yet he hated Jones, and the mention of Jones's name thus infuriated him, even as a scarlet rag a bull. Poor Curre was not a bad-hearted fellow after all, and at a subsequent period Jones made his acquaintance. Now, one great principle Jones holds by is this, that if any man hate you, it must be in some measure your own fault; you must in some way have given offence to the man. So Jones, who is a very genial and straightforward person, asked Curre to tell him honestly why he had so keenly opposed his appointment to the beadleship, adding that he feared he had given Curre offence in some way or other, though he had never intended it; and Curre, after some hesitation and with a good deal of shame, replied, "Well, the fact is, I could not bear to see you riding such a fine horse, and Mr. Sneakymen told me you paid a hundred and twenty pounds for it."—"My friend Curre," was the reply, "I gave just forty for that horse, and how could you believe anything said by Sneakymen?" Curre assured Jones that the reason why he had disliked him was just that he knew so little of him, and that when he came to know him his dislike immediately passed into a real warm and penitent regard. And when Curre died soon after, he left Jones ten thousand pounds. Curre

had no relations, so it was all right; and Jones had nineteen children, so it was all right for him too.

Reader, take a large sheet of paper, — foolscap paper.

Take a pen. Sit down at a table where there is ink.

Write out a list of all the persons you dislike, adding a brief statement of the reason or reasons why you dislike each of them.

Having written accordingly, ask yourself this question: Am I doing well to be angry with these persons? Have they given me offence to justify this dislike?

And now listen to this prophecy. You will be obliged to confess that they have not. You will feel ashamed of your dislike for them. You will resolve to cease disliking them.

Believe one who has tried. Here on this table is a large foolscap page. Three names did I write down of people I disliked; then I wrote down the cause why I disliked the first, and it looked, being written down, so despicably small, that I felt heartily ashamed. And now, you large page, go into the fire; and with you these dislikes shall perish. At this moment I don't dislike any human being, and if anybody dislikes me I hope he will cease doing so. If ever I gave him offence, I am sorry for it.

Yet I cannot quite agree with Jones in thinking that, in every case where dislike is felt, it is at least in part the fault of the disliked person. In many cases it is: not in all. A retired oilman of large wealth bought a tract of land, and went to reside on it. He found that his parish clergyman drove a handsome carriage, and had a couple of men-servants. The old oilman was infuriated. The clergyman's wife erected a conservatory:

the oilman had an epileptic fit. Now all this was entirely the oilman's own fault. A retired officer went to live in a certain rural district. He dined at six o'clock. Several people round, who dined at five, took mortal offence. O for the abolition of white slavery! When will human beings be suffered to do as they please?

I have remarked, too, that most stupid people hate all clever people. I have witnessed a very weak and silly man repeat, with a fatuous and feeble malignity, like a dog without teeth trying to bite, some story to the prejudice of an eminent man in the same profession. And even worse: you may find such a man repeat a story not at all to the disadvantage of the eminent man, under the manifest impression that it *is* to his disadvantage. I have rarely heard Mr. Snarling say anything with more manifest malignity, than when he said that my friend Smith had bought a fire-proof safe in which to keep his sermons. Well, was there any harm in that? "Bedwell said he would take nothing under the chancellorship," said Mr. Dunup. Perhaps Bedwell should not have said so; but the fact proved to be that he got the chancellorship.

Clergymen of little piety or ability, and with empty churches, dislike those clergymen whose churches are very full. You may discern this unworthy feeling exhibited in a hundred pitiful, spiteful little ways. I have remarked, too, that the emptier a man's church grows, the higher becomes his doctrine. And flagrant practical neglect of duty is in some cases compensated by violent orthodoxy, the orthodoxy being shown mainly by accusing other people of heterodoxy.

Unworthy people hate those who do a thing better

than themselves. An inefficient rector empties his church. He gets a popular curate who fills it. The parishioners present the curate with a piece of plate. Forthwith the rector dismisses the curate. Or perhaps the rector dare not venture on that. He waits till the curate gets a parish of his own; and then he diligently excludes him from the pulpit whence his sermons were so attractive. His old friends shall never see or hear him again, if the rector can prevent it. And further, the rector and his wife disseminate wretched little bits of scandal as to the extravagant sayings and doings of the curate, all exaggerated and mostly invented.

The heroic way of taking gossip is that in which the old Earl Marischals took it, when it was a more serious thing than now. Above the door of each of their castles, there were written on the stone these words:—

THEY HAIF SAYD :

QHAT SAYD THEY ?

LAT THEM SAY !





## CHAPTER XV.

### ARCHBISHOP WHATELY ON BACON.\*

**T**HIS is in every way a remarkable book. We have before us in this volume the most generally popular work of the greatest and meanest man of his time, with a Commentary of Annotations by the man who, of all living authors, approaches in many of his intellectual characteristics nearest to Bacon himself. We find in the writings of Archbishop Whately the same independence of thought which distinguishes the writings of Bacon; the same profusion of illustration by happy analogies which is characteristic of Bacon's later works; the same clearness, point, and precision of style. We do not wonder that the accomplished prelate, accustomed (as he tells us in his Preface) to write down from time to time the observations which suggested themselves to him in reading Bacon's *Essays*, should have found them grow beneath his hand into a volume; and we cannot but regard it as a boon conferred upon all educated men, that this volume has been given to the world. Nor must we omit to remark, in this age of readers for mere entertainment,

\* Bacon's *Essays*: with Annotations by Richard Whately, D. D., Archbishop of Dublin.

that although the volume be a large one, written by an archbishop, and consisting of comments upon the thoughts of a great philosopher, the book is invested with such an attractive interest, that it cannot fail to prove a readable and entertaining one, even to minds unaccustomed to high-class thought and incapable of severe thinking. The somewhat severe terseness of the *Essays* is relieved by the lighter and more popular tone of the Annotations. Archbishop Whately's mind is of that nature that it takes up each of a vast range of subjects with equal ease, and apparently with equal gusto ; grappling with a great difficulty or unravelling a great perplexity with no more appearance of effort than when lightly touching a social folly, such as might have invited the notice of the author of *The Book of Snobs*, or when playfully blowing to the winds an error not worth serious refutation. Hardly ever in the range of literature have we observed the workings of an intellect in which nervous strength is so combined with delicate tact. We are reminded of Mr. Nasmyth's steam-hammer, which can smash a mass of steel in shivers, or by successive taps drive a nail through a half-inch plank.

We are thankful that in noticing this book, we are concerned rather with the annotator than with the essayist ; for not without much pain can we look back on Lord Bacon's history. There is something jarring in the mingled feelings of admiration and disgust with which we think of Bacon's greatness and meanness ; his intellectual grasp, his keen insight, his wit, his imagination (sober in its wildest flights), his serene temper, his brilliant conversation, his courtly manners, his freedom from arrogance and pretence ; and then, on the

other side, his cold heart and mean spirit, his low and unworthy ambition, his despicable selfishness, his flagrant dishonesty, his crawling servility, his perfidy as a friend, his sneakiness as a patriot, his corruption as a judge. As to his intellectual greatness there can be no question ; though there can be no error more complete than to regard him as the inventor or discoverer of the Inductive Philosophy. He did not invent it ; he did not skilfully apply it. His philosophy differed from that which preceded it less in method than in aim ; and it is glory enough to have mainly contributed to turn the thoughts and the efforts of thoughtful and energetic men away from the profitless philosophy of the schools to the practical good of mankind. In the *commodis humanis inservire* we have the end and the spirit of the Baconian philosophy.

The *Essays* constitute Bacon's most popular work, if not his greatest. They illustrate in thought and style what was said of him by Ben Jonson, that "No man ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, nor suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered." Their subjects are well known. We have in them the thoughts of Bacon on a considerable range of matters, briefly expressed, most of them not occupying more than a page or two. They may have been written, many of them, at a short sitting, though they manifestly give us the results of mature and protracted thought. And here and there occur those pregnant, suggestive sentences which Archbishop Whately has taken as texts for his own observations. The Archbishop reminds us in his preface, by way of guarding himself from the imputation of presumption in adding to what Bacon has

said on many subjects, that the word "essay," which has now come to signify a full and careful treatise on a subject, was in Bacon's day more correctly understood as meaning a slight sketch to be filled up and followed out; a something to *set the reader a-thinking*; and the Annotations, which form by a great deal the larger part of the book, contain the reflections and remarks which have been suggested to the Archbishop in his reading of the *Essays*.

The Annotations are of all degrees, from a sentence or two of inference or illustration to a pretty full discourse on some topic more or less directly suggested by Bacon. The writer frequently presses opinions which he has elsewhere maintained, and gives many extracts from his own published works. We also find several quotations from other authors, selected (we need not say) with great judgment; and showing us incidentally how wide is the Archbishop's reading, and how completely he keeps up with whatever is valuable in even the lighter literature of the day. In that portion of this volume which is properly Dr. Whately's own, we have the acute observations of a writer who knows both books and men; of a keen observer; a thinker almost always sound amid extraordinary independence and originality; a master of a style so beautifully lucid alike in thought and expression, that we hardly feel, as we follow in the track, how difficult it would be to tread that path without the direction of a guide so able and so sympathetic.

The characteristics of Archbishop Whately are very marked; and his negative characteristics not less so than his positive. No thoughtful man can become

acquainted with his writings, without being struck quite as much by what this distinguished prelate *is not*, as by what he *is*. Indeed, what the Archbishop of Dublin is not, is perhaps the thing which at first impresses us most deeply. We discover in his works the productions of a mind which can apply itself to the most diverse subjects, and give forth the soundest and shrewdest sense on all, expressed in the most felicitous forms. We cannot but remark his vast information; and his ripe wisdom, moral, social, and political. But, after all, the thing that strikes us most is, how thoroughly different Archbishop Whately is from most people's idea of an archbishop. We associate with so elevated a dignitary a certain ponderousness of mind; we assume that his intellect must be a machine which by its weight and power is rather unfitted for light work; and we are taken by surprise when we find a prelate so dignified combining with the graver strength of understanding a liveliness, pith, and point, a versatility, wit, and playfulness, which, without taking an atom from that respect which is due to his high position, yet put us at our ease in his presence, and fit him for the attractive discussion of almost every topic which can interest the scholar and the gentleman. The general idea of an archbishop is of something eminently respectable, perhaps rather dull and prosy; never startling us in any way by thought or style; looking at all the world through his own medium, and from his own elevated point of view; and above all, an intensely *safe man*. The very reverse of all this is Archbishop Whately. Never, indeed, does he say anything inconsistent with his dignified position; but his works show him to us

(and we know him by his works alone) as the independent thinker, often thinking very differently from the majority of men, — the thorough man of the world, in the true sense of that phrase, — perfectly versant in the ways of living men, from the tricks of the petty tradesman up to the diplomacies of cabinets and the social ethics of exclusive circles, — at home in the literature of the hour no less than in the weightier letters of philosophy, theology, and politics, — the master of eloquent logic, from the heavy artillery which demolishes a stronghold of error or scepticism, to the light touch that unravels a paradox or puts a troublesome simpleton in his right place, — the master of wit, from the half-playful breath which shows up a little social folly, to the scathing sarcasm which turns the laugh against the scoffer, and which shows the would-be wise as the most arrant of fools.

As for Archbishop Whately's positive characteristics, we believe that most of his intelligent readers will agree with us when we place foremost among these his acuteness and independence of thought. The latter of these qualities he possesses almost in excess. We believe that to the Archbishop of Dublin the fact that any opinion is very generally entertained, so far from being a recommendation, is rather a reason for regarding it with suspicion. It is amusing how regularly we find it occurring in the prefaces to his works, that one reason for the publication of each is his belief that erroneous views are commonly entertained as to the subject of it. And when we consider how most men receive their opinions upon all subjects ready-made, we cannot appreciate too highly one who, in the emphatic sense of the phrase,

*thinks for himself.* It is right to add that there is hardly an instance in which so much originality of thought can be found in conjunction with so much justice and sobriety of thought. In Archbishop Whately's writings we have independence without the least trace of wrong-headedness. His views, especially in his *Lectures on a Future State*, on *Good and Evil Angels*, and on the *Characters of the Apostles*, are often startling at the first glance, because very different from those to which we have grown accustomed; but he generally succeeds in convincing us that his opinion is the sound and natural one; and where he fails to carry our conviction along with him, he leaves us persuaded of his good faith, and sensible that much may be said on his part.

Another striking characteristic of Archbishop Whately is, his extraordinary power of illustrating moral truths and principles by analogies to external nature. Not even Abraham Tucker possessed this power in so eminent a degree; and the Archbishop's illustrations are always free from that grossness and vulgarity which often deform those of Tucker, who (as he himself tells us) did not scruple to take a figure from the kitchen or the stable, if it could make his meaning plainer. We cannot call to mind any English author who employs imagery in such a profuse degree, yet without the faintest suspicion of that nerveless and aimless accumulation of figures and comparisons which constitutes what is vulgarly termed *floweriness* of style. We have no fine things put in for mere fine-writing's sake. Dr. Whately's illustrations are not only invariably apt and striking; they really *illustrate* his point, they *throw light upon it*, and make it plainer than it was before. They are

hardly ever long drawn out ; consisting very frequently in a happy analogy suggested in one clause of a sentence, — the writer being anxious to make that step in his reasoning clear, yet too much bent upon the ultimate conclusion he is aiming at to linger upon that step longer than is necessary to make it so.

To these literary qualifications we add, that Archbishop Whately's information, though evidently reaching over a vast field, is yet minutely accurate in the smallest details ; and, without the least tinge of pedantry, the fine scholarship of the writer often shines through his work. It is almost superfluous to allude to the invariable clearness, point, and felicity of the Archbishop's English style, which often warms into eloquence of the highest class, — effective and telling, without one grain of clap-trap.

We should give an imperfect view of the characteristics of the Archbishop of Dublin, if we did not mention, as a marked one, his intense honesty of purpose, his evident desire to arrive at exact truth, and his carefulness to state opinions and arguments with perfect fairness. Nor should his fearless out-spokenness be forgotten. He does not hesitate to call an opponent's argument nonsense when he has proved it to be so. "Often very silly, and not seldom very mischievous,"\* is his description of the speculations of writers of the Emerson school. Our readers are perhaps acquainted with the Archbishop's remarks upon some of the German writers of the present day : —

"The attention their views have attracted, considering their extreme absurdity, is something quite wonderful. But

\* Preface, p. v.

there are many persons who are disposed to place *confidence* in any one, in proportion, not to his *sound judgment*, but to his *ingenuity* and *learning*; qualifications which are sometimes found in men (such as those writers) who are utterly deficient in common-sense and reasoning powers, and knowledge of human nature, and who consequently fall into such gross absurdities as would be, in any matter unconnected with religion, regarded as unworthy of serious attention." \*

It is impossible to read the Annotations without feeling what an acute observer of men is Archbishop Whately. How carefully, in his passage through life, has his quick eye gathered up the characteristics of those persons with whom he has been brought in contact, — their pretensions, foibles, tricks, and errors; and how well he turns his recollections to account, when an example or illustration is needed! We likewise find many indications that he has been keenly alive, not more to the ways of men than to the little phenomena of nature. We refer our readers particularly to a passage on the degrees of cold which are experienced in the course of a single night (p. 305); and we wonder how many persons, even of those who generally live in the country, are aware of the following fact: —

"Any one who is accustomed to go out before daylight will often, in the winter, find the roads full of liquid mud half an hour before dawn, and by sunrise as hard as a rock. Then those who have been in bed will often observe that 'it was a hard frost last night,' when in truth there had been no frost at all till daybreak." — p. 305.

And the final feature we remark in Archbishop Whately's character is one which must afford the highest satis-

\* Lectures on the Characters of Our Lord's Apostles, p. 166.

faction to all who have, in their own experience, found earnest personal religion existing most markedly in conjunction with great weakness, ignorance, and prejudice; and to all who have ever mingled in the society of able and cultivated men, who thought that contemptuously to put religion aside was the indication of mental vigor and enlightenment. It is most satisfactory to find the writings of one of the strongest-minded men of his time all pervaded and inspirited by a religious principle and feeling, earnest, unaffected, really practical and influential, — as perfectly free from weakness as from self-assertion and self-conceit.

We believe that from this volume of Annotations we could construct a tolerably complete scheme of Archbishop Whately's views on politics, morals, social ethics, and the general conduct of life. We have some indication of his peculiar tastes and bent from observing which among Bacon's *Essays* he passes by without remark. He has little to say concerning "Masques and Triumphs." We should judge that his nature has little about it of that "soft side" which leads to take delight in the recurrence of periodical festal occasions, with their kindly remembrances: we should judge that a solitary Christmas would be much less of a trial to him than it would be to us; although the instances of Dickens and Jerrold prove that the warmest feeling about such seasons and associations is quite consistent with even extreme opinions on the side of progress. Then the Archbishop passes the *Essays* on "Building" and "Gardens" without a word; although these subjects would have set many men off into a rhapsody of delighted details and fancies. We judge that Dr.

Whately has not a very keen relish for external nature *for its own sake* ; his chief interest in it appears to be in the tracing of analogies between the material and moral worlds. The fact that Bacon's ideas both on Building and Gardening are now quite out of date would be only the stronger reason to many men for launching out upon the subject ; and how deeply could some sympathize with Bacon in his ideal picture of a princely palace, — one of those delightful palaces in the air about whose site there are permitted no drawbacks or shortcomings on the part of Nature, — round which ancestral woods grow at a moment's notice, and within whose view noble rivers, fed by no springs, can flow up-hill, — and in whose architecture expense and time need never be thought of. But not many men are likely ever to live in palaces ; not many more, perhaps, would care to picture out such a life for themselves ; and we prefer to Bacon's palace, the delightful description in Mr. Loudon's *Encyclopædia of Architecture*, of what he calls the *Beau Ideal English Villa*.

We have long regarded the Archbishop of Dublin as, in several respects, almost the foremost man of this day. It says little for the age's intelligence, that while Dr. Cumming's paltry claptraps sell by scores of thousands of copies, Archbishop Whately commands an audience, fit indeed, but comparatively few ; for his writings possess a very high degree of that most indispensable, though not highest, of all qualities, *interest*. He is never heavy nor tiresome. Very dull people may understand, though they may not appreciate him. But we are persuaded that his archbishopric lessens the number of his readers. Readers for mere amusement are afraid to begin what has been written by so great a man.

We need hardly say that it is wholly impossible within the limits of a short article to give any just idea, either of the variety of topics which the Archbishop has discussed, or of the manner in which he has discussed them. Bacon himself described his *Essays* as "handling those things wherein both men's lives and persons are most conversant"; and Archbishop Whately's Annotations, ranging over the same wide field, can be described, as to their scope, in no more definite terms. But the same necessary want of unity which makes the book so hard to speak of as a whole renders it the easier to consider in its separate parts. It consists of precious detached pieces, each of which loses nothing by being individually regarded. But before glancing at some of the topics which the Archbishop has treated, we wish to give our readers a few specimens of those admirable illustrations of moral truths by physical analogies which form so striking a feature of his writings:—

"There are two kinds of orators, the distinction between whom might be thus illustrated. When the moon shines brightly we are apt to say, 'How beautiful is this *moonlight*!' but in the daytime, 'How beautiful are the trees, the fields, the mountains!'—and, in short, all the *objects* that are illuminated; we never speak of the sun that makes them so. Just in the same way, the really greatest orator shines like the sun, making you think much of the *things* he is speaking of; the second-best shines like the moon, making you think much of *him* and his *eloquence*."—(p. 327, Annotation on Essay "Of Discourse.")

"In most subjects, the utmost knowledge that any man can attain to, is but 'a little learning' in comparison of what he remains ignorant of. The view resembles that of an American forest, in which the more trees a man cuts down, the

greater is the expanse of wood he sees around him." — (p. 446, Annotation on Essay "Of Studies.")

In an annotation on the Essay "Of Negotiating," Archbishop Whately mentions, as a caution to be observed, that in combating, whether as a speaker or a writer, deep-rooted prejudices, and maintaining unpopular truths, the point to be aimed at should be, to adduce what is sufficient, and *not much more* than is sufficient, to prove your conclusion. You affront men's self-esteem, and awaken their distrust, by proving the *extreme absurdity* of thinking differently from yourself; and —

"in this way the very clearness and force of the demonstration will, with some minds, have an opposite tendency to the one desired. Laborers who are employed in *driving wedges* into a block of wood are careful to use blows of no greater force than is just sufficient. If they strike too hard, the elasticity of the wood will *throw out the wedge*." — (p. 432.)

On the Essay "Of Praise," Archbishop Whately remarks, with admirable truth, that it is needless to insist, as many do, upon the propriety of not being wholly indifferent to the opinions formed of us; as that tendency of our nature stands more in need of *keeping under* than of encouraging or vindicating: —

"It must be treated like the grass on a lawn which you wish to keep in good order: you neither attempt nor wish to *destroy* the grass; but you mow it down from time to time, as close as you possibly can, well trusting that there will be quite enough left, and that it will be sure to grow again." — (p. 491.)

On the Essay "Of Youth and Age," we have many excellent remarks upon the fact to which the experience

of most men bears testimony, that great precocity of understanding is rarely followed by superior intellect in after-life; and more especially that there is nothing less promising than, in early youth, "a certain full-formed, settled, and, as it may be called, *adult* character:" —

"A lad who has, to a degree that excites wonder and admiration, the character and demeanor of an intelligent man of mature years, will probably be *that*, and nothing more, all his life, and will cease accordingly to be anything remarkable, because it was the precocity alone that ever made him so. It is remarked by greyhound-fanciers that a well-formed, compact-shaped puppy never makes a fleet dog. They see more promise in the loose-jointed, awkward, clumsy ones. And even so, there is a kind of crudity and unsettledness in the minds of those young persons who turn out ultimately the most eminent;" — (p. 405.)

How admirably true! We heartily wish that many injudicious parents would lay this to heart. Who is there who does not remember, how, at school and college, some cautious, slow-speaking, never-committing-himself lad, whose seeming precocity of judgment was mainly the result of stolidity of understanding and slowness of circulation, was evermore thrust as a grand exemplar before the view of those whose quicker intellect and warmer heart often got them into scrapes from which *he* kept clear, but promised what *he* could never attain, till the very name of prudence, discretion, reserve, became hateful and disgusting! And how regularly that pattern boy or lad has proved in after-life the dullard and booby which his young companions, in their more natural frank-heartedness, instinctively knew and felt he was even then!

On the Essay "Of Friendship" the Archbishop observes:—

"It may be worth noticing as a curious circumstance, when persons past forty before they were at all acquainted form together a very close intimacy of friendship. For grafts of *old wood to take*, there must be a wonderful congeniality between the trees."— (p. 276.)

On Bacon's remark, that "a man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time," the Archbishop says, —

"And this may be, not only from his having had better opportunities, but also from his understanding better how to learn by experience. Several different men, who have all had equal, or even the very same experience, — that is, have been witnesses or agents in the same transactions, — will often be found to resemble so many different men looking at the same book. One, perhaps, though he distinctly sees black marks on white paper, has never learned his letters; another can read, but is a stranger to the *language* in which the book is written; another has an *acquaintance* with the language, but understands it imperfectly; another is familiar with the *language*, but is a stranger to the subject of the book, and wants power or previous instruction to enable him fully to take in the author's drift; while another again perfectly comprehends the whole."— (p. 400.)

In an annotation on the Essay "Of Dispatch," we find some thoughts on the advantage of knowing when to act with promptitude and when with deliberation, and of being able suitably to meet either case. Then the Archbishop goes on as follows:—

"If you cannot find a counsellor who *combines* these two kinds of qualification (which is a thing not to be calculated

on), you should seek for some of each sort, — one to devise and mature measures that will admit of delay ; and another to make prompt guesses, and suggest sudden expedients. A bow, such as is approved of by our modern toxophilites, must be *backed* — that is, made of *two* slips of wood glued together : one a very *elastic*, but somewhat *brittle* wood ; the other much less elastic, but very *tough*. The one gives the requisite spring, the other keeps it from breaking. If you have two such counsellors as are here spoken of, you are provided with a *backed* bow." — (p. 250.)

Describing the two opposite sorts of men who equally precipitate a country into anarchy, the one sort by obstinately resisting all innovations, and the other by recklessly hurrying into violent changes without reason, the Archbishop says : —

" The two kinds of absurdity here adverted to may be compared respectively to the acts of two kinds of irrational animals, a moth and a horse. The moth rushes into a flame, and is burned ; and the horse obstinately stands still in a stable that is on fire, and is burned likewise. One may often meet with persons of opposite dispositions, though equally unwise, who are accordingly prone respectively to these opposite errors ; the one partaking more of the character of the moth, and the other of the horse." — (p. 244.)

Mr. Macaulay tells us, and experience confirms his statement, that it is not easy to make a simile go on all-fours, and incomparably more difficult to attain strict accuracy when an analogy is drawn out to any length. But Archbishop Whately overcomes this difficulty. There is no hitch whatever in the following comparison, though it runs to very minute and exact details : —

" The effect produced by any writing or speech of an argu-

mentative character, on any subject on which diversity of opinion prevails, may be compared — supposing the argument to be of any weight — to the effects of a fire-engine on a conflagration. That portion of the water which falls on solid stone walls is poured out where it is not needed. That, again, which falls on blazing beams and rafters, is cast off in volumes of hissing steam, and will seldom avail to quench the fire. But that which is poured on woodwork that is just beginning to kindle, may stop the burning; and that which wets the rafters not yet ignited, but in danger, may save them from catching fire. Even so, those who already concur with the writer as to some point, will feel gratified with, and perhaps bestow high commendation on, an able defence of the opinions they already hold; and those, again, who have fully made up their minds on the opposite side, are more likely to be displeased than to be convinced. But both of these parties are left nearly in the same mind as before. Those, however, who are in a hesitating and doubtful state, may very likely be decided by forcible arguments; and those who have not hitherto considered the subject may be induced to adopt opinions which they find supported by the strongest reasons. But the readiest and warmest approbation a writer meets with will usually be from those whom he has *not* convinced, because they were convinced already. And the effect the most important and the most difficult to be produced he will usually, when he does produce it, hear the least of." — (p. 432.)

We do not know where to find a comparison more correct or more beautiful than that with which the highly-gifted prelate concludes his remarks on those writers who inculcate morality, with an exclusion of all reference to religious principle. He gives us to understand that the resolute manner in which Miss Edgeworth, in her works, ignored Christianity, was the result

of an entire disbelief in its doctrines. But even this sad fact leaves her open to the charge of having falsified poetical truth; inasmuch as it cannot be denied that Christianity, true or false, does exist, and does exercise a material influence on the feelings and conduct of some of the believers in it. And to represent all sorts of people as involved in all sorts of circumstances, while yet none ever makes the least reference to a religious motive, is artistically unnatural. The graver objection still remains, that the moral excellences described in non-religious fictions as existing, cannot exist, cannot be realized, except by resorting to principles which, in those fictions, are unnoticed. And the young reader should therefore be reminded —

“that all these ‘things that are lovely and of good report,’ which have been placed before him, are the genuine fruits of the Holy Land, though the spies who have brought them bring also an evil report of that land, and would persuade us to remain wandering in the wilderness.” — (p. 468.)

In pointing out the unfairness to a new colony of making it the receptacle of the blackguards and scapegraces of the old country, by the system of penal transportation, the Archbishop happily illustrates the way in which people of not very logical minds are brought to associate things which are not merely unconnected, but inconsistent: —

“In other subjects, as well as in this, I have observed that two distinct objects may, by being dexterously presented again and again in quick succession, to the mind of a cursory reader, be so associated together in his *thoughts* as to be conceived capable, when in fact they are not, of being *actually* combined in practice. The fallacious belief thus induced

bears a striking resemblance to the optical illusion effected by that ingenious and philosophical toy called the 'thaumatrope'; in which two objects painted on opposite sides of a card — for instance, a man and a horse, a bird and a cage — are, by a quick rotatory motion, made so to impress the eye in combination, as to form one picture, of the man on the horse's back, — the bird in the cage, &c. As soon as the card is allowed to remain at rest, the figures, of course, appear as they really are, separate and on opposite sides. A mental illusion closely analogous to this is produced, when, by a rapid and repeated transition from one subject to another alternately, the mind is deluded into an idea of the actual combination of things that are really incompatible. The chief part of the defence which various writers have advanced in favor of the system of penal colonies consists, in truth, of a sort of intellectual thaumatrope. The prosperity of the colony, and the repression of crime, are, by a sort of rapid whirl, presented to the mind as combined in one picture. A very moderate degree of calm and fixed attention soon shows that the two objects are painted on *opposite sides* of the card." — (p. 334.)

On the risk run by superstitious persons of falling into grave error: —

"Minds strongly predisposed to superstition may be compared to heavy bodies just balanced on the verge of a precipice. The slightest touch will send them over; and then the greatest exertion that can be made may be insufficient to arrest their fall." — (p. 155.)

Illustration is sometimes the most cogent of argument. A volume of reasoning against ultra-conservatism would not equal, for general impression, the following plain statement of the case: —

"Is there not, then, some reason for the ridicule which

Bacon speaks of, as attaching to those 'who too much reverence old times?' To say that no changes shall take place is to talk idly. We might as well pretend to control the motions of the earth. To resolve that none shall take place *except* what are undesigned and accidental, is to resolve that though a clock may gain or lose indefinitely, at least we will take care that it shall never be regulated. 'If time' (to use Bacon's warning words) 'alters things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end?'" — (pp. 236, 237.)

We shall throw together, without remark, some further examples of Archbishop Whately's power of illustrating the moral by the physical. So marked a feature in his intellectual portraiture deserves, we think, extended notice. But it is only by studying the Annotations for themselves, that our readers can form any just idea of the affluence and exuberance of happy imagery with which they sparkle all over:—

"To these small wares, enumerated by Bacon, might be added a very hackneyed trick, which yet is wonderfully successful,—to affect a delicacy about mentioning particulars, and hint at what you *could* bring forward, only you do not wish to give offence. 'We could give many cases to prove that such and such a medical system is all a delusion, and a piece of quackery; but we abstain, through tenderness for individuals, from bringing names before the public.' 'I have observed many things—which, however, I will not particularize—which convince me that Mr. Such-a-one is unfit for his office; and others have made the same remark; but I do not like to bring them forward,' &c., &c.

"Thus an unarmed man keeps the unthinking in awe, by assuring them that he has a pair of loaded pistols in his pocket, though he is loth to produce them." — (p. 210.)

"A man who plainly perceives that, as Bacon observes, there are some cases which call for promptitude, and others which require delay, and who has also sagacity enough to perceive *which* is which, will often be mortified at perceiving that he has come too late for some things, and too soon for others; that he is like a skilful engineer, who perceives how he could, fifty years earlier, have effectually preserved an important harbor which is now irrecoverably silted up, and how he could, fifty years hence, though not at present, reclaim from the sea thousands of acres of fertile land at the delta of some river." — (p. 203.)

"As in contemplating an ebbing tide, we are sometimes in doubt, on a short inspection, whether the sea is really receding, because, from time to time, a wave will dash farther up the shore than those which have preceded it, but, if we continue our observation long enough, we see plainly that the boundary of the land is on the whole advancing; so here, by extending our view over many countries and through several ages, we may distinctly perceive the tendencies which would have escaped a more confined research." — (p. 300.)

"An ancient Greek colony was like what gardeners call a *layer*; a portion of the parent tree, with stem, twigs, and leaves imbedded in fresh soil till it had taken root, and then severed. A modern colony is like handfuls of twigs and leaves pulled off at random, and thrown into the earth to take their chance." — (p. 341.)

"*'There be that can pack the cards, and yet cannot play well.'*

"Those whom Bacon here so well describes are men of a clear and quick sight, but short-sighted. They are ingenious in particulars, but cannot take a comprehensive view of a whole. Such a man may make a good captain, but a bad general. He may be clever at surprising a picket, but would fail in the management of a great army and the conduct of a campaign. He is like a chess-player who takes several pawns, but is checkmated." — (p. 215.)

"The truth is, that in all the *serious* and important affairs of life men are attached to what they have been used to; in matters of *ornament* they covet novelty; in all systems and institutions, — in all the ordinary business of life, — in all fundamentals, — they cling to what is the established course; in matters of detail, — in what lies, as it were, on the surface, — they seek variety. Man may, in reference to this point, be compared to a tree whose stem and main branches stand year after year, but whose leaves and flowers are fresh every season." — (p. 228.)

"In no point is the record of past times more instructive to those capable of learning from other experience than their own, than in what relates to the history of *reactions*.

"It has been often remarked by geographers that a river flowing through a level country of soft alluvial soil never keeps a straight course, but winds regularly to and fro, in the form of the letter S many times repeated. And a geographer, on looking at the course of any stream as marked on a map, can at once tell whether it flows along a plain (like the river *Meander*, which has given its name to such windings), or through a rocky and hilly country. It is found, indeed, that if a straight channel be cut for any stream in a plain consisting of tolerably soft soil, it never will long continue straight, unless artificially kept so, but becomes crooked, and increases its windings more and more every year. The cause is, that any little wearing away of the bank in the softest part of the soil, on one side, occasions a *set* of the stream against this hollow, which increases it, and at the same time drives the water aslant against the opposite bank a little lower down. This wears away that bank also; and thus the stream is again driven against a part of the first bank, still lower; and so on, till by the wearing away of the banks at these points on each side, and the deposit of mud (gradually becoming dry land) in the comparatively still water between them, the course of the stream becomes sinuous, and its windings increase more and more.

"And even thus, in human affairs, we find alternate movements, in nearly opposite directions, taking place from time to time, and generally bearing some proportion to each other in respect of the violence of each; even as the highest flood-tide is succeeded by the lowest ebb." — (p. 175.)

Very beautifully, in the following paragraph, does the Archbishop illustrate the law that whatever is to last long, must grow slowly :—

"We hear of volcanic islands thrown up in a few days to a formidable size, and in a few weeks or months sinking down again or washed away; while other islands, which are the summits of banks covered with weed and drift-sand, continue slowly increasing year after year, century after century. The man that is in a hurry to see the full effect of his own tillage should cultivate annuals, not forest-trees. The clear-headed lover of truth is content to wait for the result of his. If he is wrong in the doctrines he maintains, or the measures he proposes, at least it is not for the sake of immediate popularity. If he is right, it will be found out in time, though perhaps not in *his* time. The preparers of the *mummies* were (Herodotus says) driven out of the house by the family who had engaged their services, with execrations and stones; but their work remains sound after three thousand years." — (p. 503.)

Although these extracts have been given mainly to exemplify Archbishop Whately's mode of enforcing and illustrating his views, they may have served likewise to give our readers some notion of the variety of topics treated in this volume, and of the Archbishop's opinions upon some of these. We hardly know how to attempt a description of the *matter* of the work as distinguished from its *manner*. There are scores of paragraphs among the Annotations which might each supply

material for extended review; and we had marked many interesting passages with the intention of discussing at some length the views contained in them. But, even after weeding out of our list the topics which appeared of minor interest (the process was that of *thinning* rather than of weeding), so many remain, that we can do no more than glance at two or three.

In the second edition of the work just published, we find no material differences when compared with the first. Archbishop Whately's opinions have been too well considered to admit of change within a few months' space. But the minute reader will find here and there many little additions, which afford pleasant proof that the author is still thinking upon the subjects treated; and which promise that, rich as this volume already is in wisdom and eloquence, it may yet be further enriched by the further observation and reflection of its writer. In the former edition the Essay "On Faction" was followed by no remarks; in the present edition it is followed by several annotations, — some of them suggested, we may believe, by recent occurrences in America. The following passage, of special interest at the present time, points out forcibly the advantage of having in a state *aliquid impercussum*, — a central rallying-point detached from all party, and to which all parties may profess attachment: —

"Bacon's remark, that a prince ought not to make it his policy to 'govern according to respect to factions,' suggests a strong ground of preference of *hereditary* to elective sovereignty. For when a chief — whether called king, emperor, president, or by whatever name — is *elected* (whether for life, or for a term of years), he can hardly avoid being the head

of a party. He who is elected will be likely to feel aversion towards those who have voted against him; who may be, perhaps, nearly half of his subjects. And they again will be likely to regard him as an *enemy*, instead of feeling loyalty to him as their prince.

"And those again who have voted *for* him, will consider him as being under an *obligation* to them, and expect him to show to them more favor than to the rest of his subjects; so that he will be rather the head of a party than the king of a people.

"Then, too, when the throne is likely to become vacant, — that is, when the king is old, or is attacked with any serious illness, — what secret canvassing and disturbance of men's minds will take place! The king himself will most likely wish that his son, or some other near relative or friend, should succeed him, and he will employ all his patronage with a view to such an election; appointing to public offices not the fittest men, but those whom he can reckon on as voters. And others will be exerting themselves to form a party against him; so that the country will be hardly ever tranquil, and very seldom well-governed.

"If, indeed, men were very different from what they are, there might be superior advantages in an elective royalty; but in the actual state of things, the disadvantages will in general greatly outweigh the benefits.

"Accordingly most nations have seen the advantage of hereditary royalty, notwithstanding the defects of such a constitution."

We heartily wish that all parents would remember and act upon the Archbishop's views, as expressed in the following passage. We believe the caution is extensively needed. We believe that many injudicious parents (with the best intention) trench upon the incommunicable prerogative of the All-wise and Almighty,

by needlessly causing griefs and disappointments to their children, under the idea that all this forms a wholesome discipline. They forget that the nature and effect of every event partaking of the character of *pain* is determined by the source it comes from. When the heaviest sorrow comes by God's appointment, we bow in submission ; and this not merely because we cannot help it, because it is vain to repine, because God *will* take his own way whether we like it or not, but because we have perfect confidence in the rightness of whatever God may do, and because we feel assured that there must be good reason for all He does, although we may not be able to discern that reason. As regards *man*, we have no such confidence. And parents may be assured that their foolish conduct towards their children in many cases *is* a training, but an extremely bad one ; it trains the children to a spirit of fruitless and therefore bitter resistance, and of dogged resentment. The philanthropist Howard, by taking the course the Archbishop reprobates, drove his son into a lunatic asylum. *He* followed that course rigorously and universally, and so the worst degree of mental disease ensued upon it. Most parents follow it only in part ; and the lesser evil follows, of alienated affection, loss of confidence, jaundiced views, and a soured heart. Yet if any parent, on a cold morning, insists on his children remaining in that part of the room most distant from the fire, when their warming their little blue hands *there* could do no harm to any human being ; or systematically refuses to permit them to go to "children's parties," not because they *are* asked to too many, but merely because it is good for them to be disappointed ; or, generally, seeks to

repress the exhibition of gaiety and light-heartedness, because "we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God," — then let that parent be assured, that surely as the field sown with tares yielded a harvest of tares, so surely will this petty tyranny bring forth its natural result, of resentment and aversion.

"Most carefully should we avoid the error of which some parents, not (otherwise) deficient in good sense, commit, of imposing gratuitous restrictions and privations, and purposely inflicting needless disappointments, for the purpose of inuring children to the pains and troubles they will meet with in after-life. Yes, be assured they *will* meet with quite *enough*, in every portion of life, including childhood, without your strewing their path with thorns of your own providing. And often enough will you have to limit their amusements for the sake of needful study, to restrain their appetites for the sake of health, to chastise them for faults, and in various ways to inflict pain or privations for the sake of avoiding some greater evils. Let this always be explained to them whenever it is possible to do so; and endeavor in all cases to make them look on the parent as never the *voluntary* giver of anything but good. To any hardships which they are convinced you inflict reluctantly, and to those which occur through the dispensation of the All-wise, they will more easily be trained to submit with a good grace than to any gratuitous sufferings devised for them by fallible men. To raise hopes on purpose to produce disappointment, to give provocation merely to exercise the temper, and, in short, to inflict pain of any kind merely as a training for patience and fortitude, — this is a kind of discipline which man should not presume to attempt. If such trials prove a discipline, not so much of cheerful fortitude as of resentful aversion and suspicious distrust of the parent as a capricious tyrant, you will have only yourself to thank for this result." — (pp. 58, 59.)

Archbishop Whately is of opinion that the fear of punishment in a future life is a motive of more permanent force than that of temporal judgments. We quote his words :—

“It is true that some men, who are nearly strangers to such a habit, may be for a time more alarmed by the denunciation of immediate temporal judgments for their sins, than by any considerations relative to ‘the things which are not seen and which are eternal.’ But the effect thus produced is much less likely to be lasting, or while it lasts to be salutary, because temporal alarm does not tend to make men spiritually-minded, and any reformation of manners it may have produced will not have been founded on Christian principles.”—(pp. 61, 62.)

Upon this we remark that there can be no question that, were future punishments realized as substantially as temporal evils, they ought to have, and would have, a much greater effect in deterring from sinful conduct. But the great difficulty with which men have to contend is the essential impossibility of realizing spiritual and unseen things in their true bulk and importance ; of feeling that a thing in the Bible, or in a sermon, is *real* a thing as something in the daylight, material world. In no case is this difficulty more felt than in regard to future punishments in another life. We may be far mistaken ; but the result of considerable experience of the ways and feelings of a rustic population, is something of doubt whether in practice the fear of future punishment produces any effect in deterring from evil courses. A mountain far away may be concealed by a shilling held close to the eye ; and future woe seems to crass minds so distant and so misty, that a very small immediate gratification quite hides it from view.

We remember, as illustrative of this, a circumstance related by a neighboring clergyman. His parishioners were sadly addicted to drinking to excess. Men and women were alike given to this degrading vice. He did, of course, all he could to repress it, but all in vain. For many years, he said, he warned the drunkards in the most solemn manner of the doom they might expect in another world; but, so far as he knew, not a pot of ale or glass of spirits the less was drunk in the parish in consequence of his denunciations. Future woe melted into mist in the presence of a replenished jug on a market-day. A happy thought struck the clergyman. In the neighboring town there was a clever medical man, a vehement teetotaler. Him he summoned to his aid. The doctor came, and delivered a lecture on the *physical* consequences of drunkenness, illustrating his lecture with large diagrams which gave shocking representations of the stomach, lungs, heart, and other vital organs, as affected by alcohol. These things came home to the drunkards, who had not cared a rush for final perdition. The effect produced was tremendous. Almost all the men and women of the parish took the total-abstinence pledge; and since that day, drunkenness has nearly ceased in that parish. Nor was the improvement evanescent; it has lasted for two or three years.

The Archbishop, in the Annotations upon "Simulation and Dissimulation," discusses the question whether an author is justified in disowning the authorship of his anonymous productions. It is, indeed, a considerable annoyance when meddling and impertinent persons, in spite of every indication that the subject is a disagreeable one, persist in trying by *fishing questions* to discover

whether we know who wrote such an article in *Fraser's Magazine* or the *Edinburgh Review*; and though no man of good sense or taste will do this, no author is safe in the existing abundance of men who are devoid of both these qualities. We have known instances in which the subject was recurred to time after time by impertinent questioners, and in which, by sudden inquiries put in the presence of many listeners, and by interrogating the relatives and intimate friends of the supposed writer, attempts were made to elicit the fact.

It is curious to remark the various opinions which have been put on record as to the casuistry of such cases. There is but one opinion as to the extreme impertinence of the questioners; and so far as *they* are concerned, the curtest refusal to answer their inquiries would be the fittest way of meeting them. But, unhappily, a refusal to reply will in many cases be regarded as an answer in the affirmative; and if the only alternatives were a *correct answer* and *no answer*, any meddling fool might reveal a literary secret of the highest importance. Dr. Johnson took up the ground that an author is justified in directly denying that he wrote his anonymous writings. Sir Walter Scott expressly declared that he was not the author of the Waverley Novels. Mr. Samuel Warren, when a lad at school, with characteristic presumption, wrote to Sir Walter as such, and Sir Walter's answer, published in Mr. Warren's *Miscellanies*, expressly repudiates the authorship. Mr. Samuel Rogers drew a nice distinction. Some forward individual, in his presence, taxed Scott with the authorship of *Waverley*; Sir Walter replied, "Upon my honor, I am not"; and Rogers thought that Scott might fairly have replied in the nega-

tive, but that he ought not to have said "Upon my honor." Swift's reply to Serjeant Bettesworth approached a shade nearer the fact:—

"Mr. Bettesworth, I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers, who, knowing my disposition to satire, advised me that if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should ask, 'Are you the author of this paper?' I should tell him that I was not the author: and THEREFORE I tell you, Mr. Bettesworth, that I am not the author of these lines."

A writer in a recent *Quarterly Review*\* appears to be for exact truth at all risks; saying that the question really is, whether impertinence in one person will justify falsehood in another; and maintaining that, if the least departure from veracity is admitted in any instance, there is no saying where the thing will end.

Archbishop Whately is reluctant to advise a departure from the truth in any case, but advises a method of meeting prying questioners which we trust reviewers will make use of on occasion. We quote the passage in which his advice occurs; it is admirable for point and pungency:—

"A well-known author once received a letter from a peer with whom he was slightly acquainted, asking him whether he was the author of a certain article in the *Edinburgh Review*. He replied that he never made communications of that kind, except to intimate friends, selected by himself for the purpose, when he saw fit. His refusal to answer, however, pointed him out — which, as it happened, he did not care for — as the author. But a case might occur in which the revelation of the authorship might involve a friend in

\* *Quarterly Review*, Vol. XCIX. p. 302.

some serious difficulties. In any such case, he might have answered something in this style: 'I have received a letter purporting to be from your lordship, but the matter of it induces me to suspect that it is a forgery by some mischievous trickster. The writer asks whether I am the author of a certain article. It is a sort of question which no one has a right to ask; and I think, therefore, that every one is bound to discourage such inquiries by answering them — whether one is or is not the author — with a rebuke for asking impertinent questions about private matters. I say 'private,' because, if an article be libellous or seditious, the law is open, and any one may proceed against the publisher, and compel him either to give up the author or to bear the penalty. If, again, it contains false statements, these, coming from an anonymous pen, may be simply contradicted. And if the arguments be unsound, the obvious course is to refute them. But *who* wrote it is a question of idle or of mischievous curiosity, as it relates to the private concerns of an individual.

"If I were to ask your lordship, 'Do you spend your income? or lay by? or outrun? Do you and your lady ever have an altercation? Was she your first love? or were you attached to some one else before?' If I were to ask such questions, your lordship's answer would probably be, to desire the footman to show me out. Now, the present inquiry I regard as no less unjustifiable, and relating to private concerns, and therefore I think every one bound, when so questioned, always, whether he is the author or not, to meet the inquiry with a rebuke.

"Hoping that my conjecture is right, of the letter's being a forgery, I remain, &c.

"In any case, however, in which a refusal to answer does not convey any information, the best way, perhaps, of meeting impertinent inquiries, is by saying, 'Can you keep a secret?' and when the other answers that he can, you may reply, 'Well, so can I.' — (pp. 68, 69.)

There are some admirable remarks under the head of the Essay on "Parents and Children," upon the propriety of considering in what direction a boy's talents lie, in making choice of a profession for him. Too frequently, when we speak of a boy's mind having a bent to some particular course, it is understood that what is meant is, that he has an extraordinary genius for it; but it is to be remembered that —

"numbers of men who would never attain any extraordinary eminence in anything, are yet so constituted as to make a very respectable figure in the department that is suited for them, and to fall below mediocrity in a different one." — (pp. 72, 73.)

Mr. Thackeray would be delighted with the short Annotations on the Essay "Of Nobility." It is in the nature of the Anglo-Saxon race to worship rank; and when (as in the United States) rank is altogether ignored, the very violence of the reaction from the way in which things are done on this side of the Atlantic, indicates how resolute is the bent of the species in the contrary direction. It is the man who has a strong disposition to fall down at the feet of a duke that is most likely to deny a duke, because he is one, the courtesy due to a man. We think that Archbishop Whately holds the balance very fairly between the two extremes: —

"In reference to nobility in individuals, nothing was ever better said than by Bishop Warburton — as is reported — in the House of Lords, on the occasion of some angry dispute which had arisen between a peer of noble family and one of a new creation. He said that, 'High birth was a thing which he never knew any one disparage, except those who had it not; and he never knew any one make a boast of it who had anything else to be proud of.'

"It was a remark by a celebrated man, himself a gentleman born, but with nothing of nobility, that the difference between a man with a long line of noble ancestors and an upstart is, that 'the one knows for certain what the other only conjectures as highly probable, that several of his forefathers deserved hanging.'" — (pp. 121, 122.)

In the Annotations on the Essay "Of Friendship," the Archbishop puts down, by irresistible force of argument, one of the most silly, mischievous, purposeless, and groundless errors which have ever been taught: we mean the doctrine that in a future life, happy souls will be no longer capable of special individual friendship. We have often been filled with burning indignation at finding in the book of some empty-headed divine who never learned logic, or in the sermon of some popular preacher thoroughly devoid of sense, taste, scholarship, modesty, and the reasoning faculty, lengthy tirades about the perfection of another world consisting much in an entire elevation above such earthly things as specific attachments. We have seen and heard it stated that in a future life blessed spirits will never remember or recognize those who were dearest to them in this; and perhaps, indeed, will not remember or recognize their own identity. It is satisfactory to know that this doctrine is as groundless as it is revolting; and most truly does Archbishop Whately say, that —

"this is one of the many points in which views of the eternal state of the heirs of salvation are rendered more uninteresting to our feelings, and consequently more uninviting, than there is any need to make them."

There is much social wisdom in the remarks upon the Essay "Of Expense." And here the Archbishop, in a

graver tone, propounds a like philosophy to that which Mr. Thackeray has in several of his writings enforced so well. It would be hard to reckon up the misery and anxiety which are produced in this country by absurd and foolish straining to "keep up appearances"; that is, with five hundred a year to entertain precisely like a man with five thousand, and generally to present a false face to the world, and seem other than what one is. When will this curse of our civilized life cease? Surely, if people knew how transparent are all the pretences by which they think to pass for wealthy folk, — how readily neighbors see through them, — how incomparably more respectable and more respected is sterling yet unaffected honesty in this matter, — this foolish display would cease, and the analogous forms of deception would cease with it. No one is taken in by them. Any one who knows the world knows thoroughly how, by an accompanying process of mental arithmetic, to make the deductions from the big talk or the pretentious show of some people, which are needed to bring the appearance down to the reality. The green-grocer got in for the day is never mistaken for the family butler. The fly jobbed by the hour is easily distinguished from the brougham which it personates. And when Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones talks largely of his or her aristocratic acquaintances, mentioning no name without "a handle to it," no one is for a moment misled into the belief that of such is the circle of society in which Mrs. Jones or Mr. Smith moves.

In the Annotations on the "Regimen of Health," there are some useful remarks upon early and late hours, and upon times of study, which we commend to

the notice of hard-working college-men. And these remarks close with the following suggestive paragraph :—

“Of persons who have led a temperate life, those will have the best chance of longevity who have done hardly anything but live ; what may be called the *neuter verbs*, — not active or passive, but only *being* ; who have had little to do, little to suffer ; but have led a life of quiet retirement, without exertion of body or mind, avoiding all troublesome enterprise, and seeking only a comfortable obscurity. Such men, if of a pretty strong constitution, and if they escape any remarkable calamities, are likely to live long. But much affliction, or much exertion, and, still more, both combined, will be sure to *tell* upon the constitution, if not at once, yet at least as years advance. One who is of the character of an active or passive verb, or, still more, both combined, though he may be said to have lived long in everything but years, will rarely reach the age of the neuters.” — (p. 305.)

“It is better,” said Bishop Cumberland, “to wear out than to rust out” ; yet there can be no question that when the energies of body and mind are husbanded, they will go further and last longer. Never to light the candle is the way to make it last forever. Yet it may suffice the man who has crowded much living into a short life, to think that he has “lived long in everything but years.”

“We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.

We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives,  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.” \*

In remarking on the Essay “Of Suspicion,” the Archbishop writes as follows :—

\* Bailey's *Festus*.

"Multitudes are haunted by the spectres, as it were, of vague surmises and indefinite suspicions, which continue thus to haunt them, just because they are vague and indefinite, because the mind has never ventured to look them boldly in the face, and put them into a shape in which reason can examine them." — (p. 317.)

A valuable practical lesson is to be drawn from the principle here laid down. Only experience can convince a man how wonderfully the mind's burden is lightened, by merely getting a clear view of what it has to do or bear or encounter. Some persons go through life in a ceaseless worry, oppressed and confused by an undefined feeling that they have a vast number and variety of things to do, and never feeling at rest or easy in their minds. If any man would just take a piece of paper and note down upon it what work he has to do, he will be surprised to find how much less formidable it will look; not that it will necessarily look little, but that the killing thing, the vague sense of undefined magnitude, will be gone. So it is with troubles, so with doubts. If any one who is possessed with the general impression that he is an extremely ill-used and unhappy man, would write down the special items of his troubles, even though the list should be of considerable length, he will find that matters are not so bad after all. There is nothing, we believe, that so aggravates all evil to the minds of most men, as when the sense of the vague, indeterminate, and innumerable, is added to it; and we are strong believers in the power of *the pen* to give most people clear and well-defined thoughts.

We may particularize as especially worthy of atten-

tion, Archbishop Whately's observations on the different periods of life at which different men attain their mental maturity (pp. 403, 404); on the license of counsel in pleading a client's cause (pp. 509-512); on the necessity of the forms and ceremonies of etiquette, even among the closest friends (p. 479); and upon the causes of sudden popularity (pp. 500-502). Students will find some valuable advice at pp. 460, 461; and young preachers, at pp. 323, 324. Dissenting ministers, and other persons who pretend an entire contempt for worldly wealth, either because the grapes hang beyond their reach, or from envy of people who are more fortunate, may turn with advantage to pp. 350, 351. Those amiable individuals who are wont to express their satisfaction that such an acquaintance has met with some disappointment, *because it will do him good*, are referred to the Archbishop's keen and just remark upon such as bestow posthumous praise upon a man whom they reviled and calumniated during his life, and may profitably consider whether the real motive from which they speak is not highly analogous:—

“It may fairly be suspected that the one circumstance respecting him which they secretly dwell on with the most satisfaction, though they do not mention it, is that he is *dead*; and that they delight in bestowing their posthumous honors on him, chiefly because they are *posthumous*; according to the concluding couplet in the *Verses on the Death of Dean Swift*:—

“And since you dread no further *ashes*,  
Methinks you may forgive his *ashes*.”

— (p. 19.)

We must draw our remarks to a close. We feel how imperfect an idea we have given of Archbishop Whate-

ly's Annotations, — of their range, their cogency, their wisdom, their experience, their practical instruction, their wit, their eloquence. The extracts we have quoted are like a sheaf of wheat brought from a field of a hundred acres; but we trust our readers may be induced to study the book for themselves.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### SOME FURTHER TALK ABOUT SCOTCH AFFAIRS.

#### A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF "*Fraser's Magazine*."

[In a former volume of Essays,\* I filled a few pages with a letter written to the editor of *Fraser's Magazine* by my neighbor and friend, Mr. Macdonald of Craig-Houlakim. That letter, when published in the Magazine, excited so much interest, that Mr. Macdonald was easily persuaded to follow it with another similar one; and, though not going all my friend's length, I have to confess the substantial truth of his statements. A little space in the present volume will not unfitly be spared for his epistle.]

GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL, CASTLE-HILL,  
EDINBURGH, May 29, 1857.

**M**Y DEAR EDITOR:—A happy thought has just occurred to me. I am sitting here on one of the back benches of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, to which venerable Court the Presbytery of Whistle-binkie, with much appreciation of real merit, has sent me as one of its lay representatives. In company with some four or five hundred more, clergymen and laymen, I am legislating for the ecclesiastical good of the people of Scotland. I have been engaged in this work for a week past, and shall be for several days longer. I am look-

\* Leisure Hours in Town, Chapter XIV.

ing out at this moment on a sea of anxious faces, interspersed with many bald heads. The atmosphere is hot and feverish. As I write, an outsider, name unknown, is making a speech to which nobody is listening. A booming sound of *Oarrdurr* occasionally proceeds from the chair when the hum of conversation grows into a roar; for my good friend Professor Robertson has been elevated to the dignity of moderator, and has taken his Aberdeenshire accent along with him. For the last week I have been kept here to all hours of the night, and I am uncommonly sleepy; and so it has occurred to me that in the intervals when the business of the House becomes devoid of interest, I might beguile the time by writing a letter to you, and indulging in a little further dissertation on the affairs of my adopted country.

When I last wrote to you, it was on a gloomy day in the end of November,—just that season when you London folk, who do not know anything better, delude yourselves into the belief that a town life is preferable to a country one. Since then we have seen once more, what I trust I never shall see without leaping-up of the heart, the gradual revival of the spring. Snowdrops and crocuses came and went; the birch grew fragrant, and the pine was tipped with delicate green; the primroses sprang in the woods; and although the dire east winds held all vegetation back for weeks beyond the usual period, yet when I left home to come to the Assembly, I thought, with a grudge, that for many a day I must forego the blossoming lilacs and hawthorns, the fruit-trees bending with their weight of bloom, the soft green of the beeches, and the floral glory of the horse-

chestnuts, around my Highland home. There is no place like the country, after all. But upon that subject you and I shall not agree, so I had better say no more about it.

Sitting in this atmosphere, my thoughts naturally take an ecclesiastical direction ; and while I look at this great company of men, almost all well-educated, and many of them possessing high ability, who from Sunday to Sunday and from day to day are devoting their energies to the religious instruction of the Scotch people, the first reflection which rises to my mind is, the total severance which exists in many parts of Scotland between a sound creed and a righteous practice. Few things surprise me more than the utter lack of practical force in Scotch orthodoxy. I have no doubt that the same thing must be lamented in all countries, by all who are anxious for the moral elevation of mankind ; but I believe that Scotland is the country which exhibits the evil in its most striking form. You can hardly find a church in this country in which sound doctrine is not regularly preached ; you can hardly find in country places a child that has not been carefully instructed in the *Shorter Catechism*, or a grown-up man or woman who does not make some profession of religion, by attending church and receiving the Sacrament ; but you would be regarded as an arrant simpleton if you fancied that nine farmers out of ten whom you saw most exemplary at their devotions on Sunday would not cheat you on Monday, if doing so would put five shillings in their pocket. Of course, you have plenty of grocers in England who mix sand with their sugar, and sugar with their tea ; and abundance of farmers who will sell you a

lame horse as a sound one if they have an opportunity ; but if such a man among you English folk were scrupulous in maintaining morning and evening prayer in his family, and given to shedding tears in church at the practical pieces of the sermon, you would certainly conclude that he was adding hypocrisy to his other sins. Not so here. You would judge quite too severely were you to conclude that a Scotch farmer was a hypocrite, because you found him shaking his head sympathetically at the minister's warnings on Sunday, and then on the following market-day at Whistle-binkie declaring solemnly that he had paid fifty pounds for a broken-winded nag which he had really bought for five. The true state of the case is that our friend Mr. Pawkie does not feel that his religious belief has any connection whatever with his daily life. These are quite separate things in his mind. It is one thing for a doctrine to be perfectly right in a sermon, and quite another for it to be an axiom safe to act upon in the grain-market or at the Falkirk Tryst.

Last Sunday, instead of remaining in Edinburgh, and getting several ribs broken in an attempt to get into the High Kirk to hear the "Sermon before the Commissioner," I preferred going quietly into the country with a friend who has a sweet place a few miles off, and attending church with him. As we walked through the quiet morning to the ivy-covered little kirk, surrounded by a host of mouldering gravestones, on which a handful of simple-looking country folk were seated, awaiting the hour of prayer, I should certainly have fancied that the people were as Arcadian in innocence as the scene was in peacefulness, had I not lived in Scotland for

some ten years past. While service was going on, I was especially struck by the devout and sympathetic attention of a venerable old foggy, apparently a respectable farmer, with long white hair and a most benevolent expression. The sermon, which was an excellent one, was upon the duty of mutual forbearance and kindness; its text was, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." The good old man's face was lighted up, and he shook his head, and gently waved his hand in sympathy with the sentiments expressed by the preacher. You would have said that he was recognizing the pathetic delineation of the principles on which he was himself acting in his daily life of charity and good will. At length the sermon was finished, and the minister, as is usual here, read the parting hymn. An expression of high and holy joy beamed upon the patriarch's countenance as he listened to it; he laid his head back, closed his eyes, and lifted his hand as though engaged in silent prayer, as the clergyman read the lines:—

"Let such as feel oppression's load  
Thy tender pity share;  
And let the helpless, homeless poor,  
Be thy peculiar care.

"Go, bid the hungry orphan be  
With thy abundance blest;  
Invite the wanderer to thy door,  
And spread the couch of rest."

In walking home from church, I made inquiry of my friend as to the benevolent and pious old gentleman whose bearing had so charmed me. He *was* a farmer, as I had surmised; a man paying some eight hundred a year of rent, and enjoying a good income. I learned

in addition to this, that he was a thorough-going old scoundrel; a notorious cheat, swearer, drunkard, and worse. He had palmed off more lame horses than any man in the county, and told more lies in his time than would sink a man-of-war. The last of his doings, which he accomplished two days before I saw him, was seizing the bed from under a poor widow whose husband had died a few months previously, and who had been wearing her fingers to the bone to support her little children, but had failed to pay the old rascal a most exorbitant rent for a miserable hovel upon his ground. Yet this man was the most exemplary in the parish in his attention to the ordinances of religion: he never was absent from a sacrament; and on the Sunday after seizing the widow's poor sticks of furniture, I beheld him, radiant with holy joy, wagging his head and waving his hand in the church of C——. How I wished I were the Emperor of Russia, and the old gentleman one of my subjects. Should not I have given him a taste of the knout! shouldn't I have made him howl!

As I write these words, Professor Pirie of Aberdeen rises to make a speech. He begins, "Aw doant see thawt, Moaderahurr," as he raises his fist in the air. Had it been Mr. Phin, or Dr. Tulloch, or Mr. McLeod, I should have prepared to listen with all attention; but as it is quite certain that Mr. Pirie's speech will not be worth listening to, and equally certain that it will be a long one, I shall occupy its duration in telling you something about a very interesting Scotch institution, — that of our parish schools.

During the month of March, in that part of the coun-

try in which I reside, two days in each week are devoted to the examination of the schools by committees of the Presbytery; and as I feel a good deal of interest in the great education question, and am anxious to know the true condition of Scotland in regard to the training of the young, I accompanied my friend, the parish clergyman, this year to the examination of seven or eight of the neighboring schools. You must understand that every parish in Scotland has its parish school, as certainly as its parish church; and in these schools generally a sound, fair education may be obtained, quite adequate to the circumstances of the Scottish peasantry. Reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion as set out in the Catechism of the Scotch Church, are taught to all comers, without distinction of sect. The result of the existence of these schools is, that except in the large cities, in which the population has outgrown their reach, *all* Scotch men and women are able to read and write. Hardly ever is a bride or bridegroom under the necessity of affixing a cross to the registration paper, from want of capacity to sign the name. These parish schools are to all intents a part of the National Church. They are endowed from its revenues, their teachers must be churchmen, and they are under the supervision of the Presbytery of the district. A committee, consisting of three or four clerical members of the Presbytery, yearly examines each school; and I can testify from personal experience that the examination is no sham. Those at which I was this year present lasted from five to nine hours each.

The salaries of the schoolmasters are shamefully inadequate. They average some twenty-five pounds

a year in most cases, with a dwelling-house. The school-houses are often wretchedly bad. The buildings are maintained, and the salaries are paid, by the *heritors*; and you will be able to judge, from what I told you in my last letter, how much is in many cases to be expected from *their* liberality. Where the parish is large, — and parishes of twelve and fourteen miles in length are common, even in the Lowlands, — there are sometimes three or four schools; and in such cases this princely endowment is *divided* among their teachers. Besides the endowment, the teachers in all cases receive the school fees paid by the children. These fees vary from eighteen-pence to four or five shillings a quarter, according to the number of branches taught. The number of children attending a parish school may average from fifty to a hundred. I have known cases in which the numbers amounted to two and even three hundred; but these instances are rare, and *then* we find the teacher claiming for his school the more ambitious designation of *academy*. Many parochial teachers derive an increase of income from the Privy Council grants; but with that curious jealousy of state interference in religious matters which is ingrained into the Scotch character, many eminent clergymen refuse to receive the grant on the accompanying condition that the government inspector shall annually examine the school. This, it is maintained by some, with a feeling which appears to me Quixotic in the extreme, implies a doubt of the sufficiency of the examination by the Presbytery.

The Scotch parish schoolmaster toils away from nine o'clock in the morning till three or four in the afternoon,

with a single hour's intermission for dinner. He teaches the alphabet, four or five reading classes, geography, history, arithmetic, writing, Latin, Greek, French, geometry, and algebra. I have seen all these things taught, and well taught, by a man who had not forty pounds a year. In remote country districts, the elementary branches only are taught; but there are very few schools in which there is not a Latin class. I venture to assert that the parish schools are for the most part extremely well, and in many instances admirably, taught; and any one who says otherwise must be altogether ignorant of the facts. The teachers are, with rare exceptions, quite exemplary in conduct, and almost always very intelligent men; many exhibit an energy and spirit in conducting their classes which are extraordinary. They teach all the year round, except six weeks in autumn. The holidays are at that season, in order that the children may work in the harvest field, reaping or attending upon the reapers. Indeed, it is a matter of general complaint in country districts that the children are frequently taken away from school to eke out their parent's earnings by field-work. A child of seven or eight years old can earn eightpence a day in weeding turnips in the season. But when he returns to school after some weeks' absence, the teacher finds that he has forgotten all he had learned before.

I have seen school-rooms of all different degrees. Sometimes they are spacious and airy, the walls well furnished with maps and pictures, and presenting a general aspect of cheerfulness and comfort. Much more frequently I have found them wretched, ill-ventilated, over-crowded apartments, with bare walls green

with damp, a moist earthen floor worn into deep hollows, and a ceiling from which the plaster had fallen in large patches. The forms and desks were rickety and creaking, cut almost in pieces by the knives of successive generations of school-boys; and the entire impression left by the place was stupefying and disheartening to the last degree. Shabby heritors find a pretext for allowing this state of things to continue, in the prospect of such a legislative act as shall put the entire educational system of Scotland upon a new footing. I heartily hope, my dear friend, that the day may not be far distant that shall give our hard-working parish teachers something like decent salaries, — fifty pounds a year is the highest salary contemplated, — and that shall rid us of those miserable school-buildings in which a boy is driven stupid by the din and the stifling atmosphere; but I cannot see why this should not be done without taking the parish schools from under the superintendence of the Church. Whatever may have been the case in past days, when both the churches of Britain were comatose enough, I can assure you that now the superintendence of the Presbytery is most effective and vigilant; and I can assure you, likewise, that the people of Scotland, as a whole, have perfect confidence in the schools as at present constituted. All sects of dissenters send their children most willingly to the parish school. The Lord Advocate, who has brought into Parliament repeated bills for separating the schools from the Church, is a mere tool in the hands of the leaders of the "Free Kirk." That "body" has built schools of its own in many parishes; and finding that it cannot support them, would like to get them taken off its hands.

This the Lord Advocate's bill would do. I do not expect, my dear editor, that you will entirely sympathize with me in what you may possibly regard my old-fashioned and illiberal notions upon this point; but they are the result of a good deal of observation and no little reflection, and I hold them firmly.

A great day in the parish is that of the school examination. The children are all assembled betimes, with clean faces, and in their Sunday clothes. It is a time of solemn expectation; and the teacher, as he walks up and down, giving his final directions, is a little nervous. The three or four clergymen who constitute the examining committee at length appear. The school-room is crowded with parents, who have come to enjoy the proficiency of their children; and a heritor or two may be seen, who have sought a reflected happiness in spending two or three pounds in prize-books, which will make many little hearts light and proud for longer than that one day. It is whispered in the school that the master has got a new coat, which appears to-day for the first time. The proceedings are opened with a prayer, offered by one of the presiding ministers; then the classes are successively called, beginning with the youngest. Who could be otherwise than interested and sympathizing, when two or three fluttered little things come up trembling, and say their A B C, making a host of mistakes, which they never would have made but for the awful presence of the Presbytery! Who but must feel for the poor cottager's wife on the back form, as she hears her little boy going all wrong in what he said to her perfectly right an hour before? Pat the little fellow on the head, and tell him he is a clever boy and

has done capitally; it will tide him over one sad disappointment of his life, and the innocent fiction will never rise up against you elsewhere. Then come the reading classes; and here you may by degrees examine more sharply. Almost all read well — of course with the broadest Scotch accent; almost all spell admirably, and most understand completely what they read. The reading-books in general use are a series edited by Dr. M'Culloch, of Greenock; an excellent series, filled with pieces so attractive that children will read them for their interest, and almost forget that they are tasks. I must confess that when I have been at school examinations, I have sometimes found myself reading Dr. M'Culloch on my own account, instead of attending to the lesson that was going forward. The children generally exhibit a thorough acquaintance with Scripture history; and the *Shorter Catechism*, an admirable compend of sound theology, and quite in keeping with the Thirty-nine Articles, is at the finger-ends of all. Grammar is generally well taught; geography, sometimes extraordinarily well. Specimens of the writing of the pupils, each on a large sheet of paper, are hung up round the room. The Latin and Greek classes come last; and the exhibition is wound up by recitations, delivered by a few of the most distinguished scholars. Sometimes the effect of these is irresistibly ludicrous. A very favorite piece is Campbell's *Hohenlinden*. A boy stands up, amid awful silence, and elevating his right hand in the air, with a face utterly blank of expression, proceeds to repeat the poem, accentuating very strongly every alternate syllable, and completely ignoring the points:—

" On Lunden whan the sahn was law  
 Ul bloodless lah thuntronen snaw  
 Und dark uz wuntur wuz thè flaw  
 Avizar roallin rawpidlah."

Some clergymen pride themselves on their power of drawing out the intelligence of children by their mode of putting questions to them. And occasionally I have seen this well done; more frequently, very absurdly. The following is a specimen of a style of examination which I have myself more than once witnessed:—

"Wahl, deer cheldrun, what was it that swallowed Jonah? Was it a sh-sh-sh-sh-shark?"—"Yahs!" roar a host of voices. "Noa, deer cheldrun, it was not a shark. Then was it an al-al-al-allig-allig-alligator?" "Yahs!" exclaim the voices again. "Noa, deer cheldrun, it was not an alligator. Then was it a wh-wh-wh-whaaale?" "Noa," roar the voices, determined to be right this time. "Yahs, deer cheldrun, it was a whale."

The prizes are distributed; and then each clergyman in turn makes a speech, expressive of his opinion of the appearance which the scholars have made, and also of the skill and industry of the teacher. This opinion is always complimentary; and in cases where teacher and scholars are in an unsatisfactory state, it is amusing to witness the struggles of the speaker to say something which shall have a general tone of compliment, and yet mean nothing. Finally, one of the examiners gives an address to the children, inculcating the general doctrine that they ought to be good boys and mind their lessons. A prayer closes the proceedings; and then the ministers are off to the manse to dinner.

A great many parochial teachers add a little to their income by holding certain small parish offices ; such as those of precentor, session-clerk, inspector of poor, post-master, and the like. I have known all these offices accumulated upon one individual. Many teachers are very eccentric men. Indeed, one would say that no one but a rather singular being would continue for thirty or forty years in a post entailing so much toil and offering such poor remuneration. A short time since, at a school examination, I found a large piece of pasteboard, bearing in a very legible hand the following inscription, written by the teacher, and evidently intended to be exhibited to the children : —

“TO MR. SMITH.

*“From a Correspondent.*

“Mr. Smith, thou art good and mild,  
Beloved by every little child,  
Thou wast formed for usefulness,  
Boys to comfort and girls to bless.”

You will hardly believe me when I tell you that the author of this remarkable poem was really a very efficient and successful teacher of young children ; and possibly he was quite correct in judging that to exhibit such an effusion as something which he had received from an unknown admirer would tend to make his pupils hold him in greater veneration. My observation of many parochial schoolmasters has led me to the belief, not only that a total want of common sense in the affairs of ordinary life is quite compatible with a man's being an excellent teacher, but even that such a want of common sense is directly conducive to his

success as a teacher. I have a theory by which I think I can both prove and explain this somewhat paradoxical opinion ; but I need not bother you with it here.

The very best teachers I have ever known have been men of no great extent of information, and of no claims to scholarship, but who have possessed a wonderful power of communicating whatever knowledge they had got. I have known one or two men, rather stupid and indiscreet in daily life, but who seemed to become inspired when placed in the presence of a class of boys or girls (for both boys and girls are educated at our parish schools), and who displayed a positive genius for putting all they had to tell their pupils in the most attractive and striking shape. And once or twice I have come across quaint, respectable old characters, who have kept school for fifty or sixty years, content in their humble and useful vocation ; much given to quoting Latin, especially in speaking to persons who did not understand it ; treasuring up a little store of old classical authors *in usum Delphini*, one of which you might find them reading in their garden on a summer day ; fond of talking about their old days at college, three-score years since ; and recounting with pride how they had beaten, in the Latin class at St. Andrews, men who had become the dignitaries of the kirk, the bar, and the bench ; or how they had lived for a term in the same lodgings with Smith, who became physician to the Court of St. Petersburg ; with Brown, who rose to be Prime Minister to the King of Ashantee ; or with Reid, who arrived at the dignity of an Austrian marshal. And philosophic men like you and me may perhaps bethink us, that to a Scotchman, with his yearning to the land

of the mountain and the flood, it may have proved a less happy lot to rise to wordly honor far away, than to cuff the ears and win the hearts of many generations of school-boys, and to be the oracle of the neighborhood, the first man in his native village.

I have already said that the close of the school examination-day is a dinner at the manse, to which the schoolmasters are always asked, in addition to the clergymen who acted as examiners. I particularly enjoy dining with my parish clergymen on the days of the school examinations. I meet several of the neighboring clergy who would please you greatly ; and I listen with a fresh interest to their conversation about church and college affairs. It opens a new field to me. I hear a great deal of men who, like the winner of the Derby, are great in their own sphere, but quite unknown to the world beyond it. I remember your telling me that you had never heard of our great preacher Caird till his sermon was published some months ago by the Queen's command. And I could mention the names of a score of Scotch preachers and professors, all great men in their way, but as unknown to you as is the name of the cook of the King of the Cannibal Islands. Now I like to hear about these men. I like to get an insight into a new set of interests and a new mode of life. I like to get a view of the Scotch character from a stand-point different from my own.

On such an occasion lately, I listened to much lamentation over the *paucity* and want of straightforwardness which are found in many country districts. *Apropos* of this, a minister who was present related how a country clergyman who died within the last twenty years,

one Sunday astonished his congregation in the following manner. He announced his text with much solemnity. It ran thus:—

*I said in my haste, All men are liars.*

Having read this verse twice with great emphasis, he proceeded with his sermon in an abstracted and meditative tone. “Ay, David,” he exclaimed, “you said that in your haste, did you? Gif you had leaved in this parish, you would have said it at your leisure!”

“To show you,” said another clergyman, “how little feeling many persons, even of respectable standing, have, that there is anything immoral in a falsehood told in the way of business, I will tell you what occurred to myself when I came to my parish. Like every minister with an extensive parish, I wanted a horse. I mentioned my need to a highly respectable farmer, who told me that by great good luck he knew where I could be suited at once. At a farm a few miles off there was for sale just such an animal as I wanted. I said that I should lose no time in going over to see the horse in question. ‘Na, na, sir,’ said my friend, with a look of remarkable shrewdness; ‘na, na, *that* will never do. If you were to gang over and say you wanted the beast, the farmer would put an extra ten or fifteen pounds on his price. But I’ll tell you what we’ll do. To-morrow forenoon I’ll drive you over to the farm, and I’ll say to the farmer, ‘This is Mr. Green, our new minister; I was jist gieing him a bit drive to see the country. And as we gaed by your house jist by chance, I telled him that you had a bit beast to sell; and although I didna think it wad suit him ava’, yet it might do no harm to look at it at ony rate. He wasna’ for comin’ in, the minister, for

he hadna time ; but we have jist come in for ae minute, and if the beast's at hame, ye can let us see't ; but if no, it doesna matter a grain.' Noo, if I say *that* to him, he'll think we dinna heed aboot the beast, and he'll no raise the price o't.' I was quite surprised that a man of good character should propose to a clergyman to become his accomplice in a plan of trickery and falsehood ; but when I recovered breath, I told my man exactly what I thought of his proposal, and said I should want a horse for ever rather than get one by telling a score of lies. But my friend was quite unabashed by my rebuke, and evidently thought I was a young man of Quixotic notions of honor, of which a little longer experience of life would happily rid me."

I was amused by a story I heard at the same time, of a simple-minded country parson, whose parish lay upon the Frith of Clyde, and so became gradually overspread with fashionable villas, to which families from Edinburgh and Glasgow resorted in summer and autumn. This worthy man persisted in exercising the same spiritual jurisdiction over these new-comers which he had been wont to exercise over his rustic parishioners before their arrival. And in particular, in his pastoral visitations, he insisted on examining the lady and gentleman of the house in *The Shorter Catechism*, in the presence of their children and servants. It happened, one autumn, that the late Lord Jeffrey, after the rising of the Court of Session, came to spend the long vacation in the parish of L——. Soon after his arrival, the minister intimated from the pulpit that upon a certain day he would "hold a diet of catechising" in the district which included the dwelling of the eminent judge. True to his time, he

appeared at Lord Jeffrey's house, and requested that the entire establishment might be collected. This was readily done; for almost all Scotch clergymen, though the catechising process has become obsolete, still visit each house in the parish once a year, and collect the family to listen to a fireside lecture. But what was Lord Jeffrey's consternation when, the entire household being assembled in the drawing-room, the worthy minister said in a solemn voice, "My Lord, I always begin my examination with the head of the family. Will you tell me, then, 'What is Effectual Calling?'" Never was an Edinburgh Reviewer more thoroughly nonplussed. After a pause, during which the servants looked on in horror at the thought that a judge should not know his *Catechism*, his lordship recovered speech, and answered the question in terms which completely dumbfounded the minister, "Why, Mr. Smith, a man may be said to discharge the duties of his calling effectually when he performs them with ability and success."\*

As I was writing these last words, the word *Episcopacy* caught my ear; and looking up, I observed a clergyman, unknown to me, addressing the House. The matter at the moment under discussion was some bill which it is proposed to introduce into Parliament to re-

\* To explain Mr. Smith's consternation to an English reader, it may be well to give the question and answer in the form in which they are familiar to young Scotland.

*Question.* — What is Effectual Calling?

*Answer.* — Effectual Calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel.

move the disabilities of Scotch Episcopal ministers. The speaker, who spoke in the main smartly and cleverly, was evidently one of the last who cling to what may be called Presbyterian Puseyism. His speech manifested an enmity to prelatic government just such as many men in England bear towards Presbyterian. "The bishops of the Scotch Episcopal Church," said he, "illegally take to themselves territorial titles, and call themselves the Bishops of Glasgow, of Aberdeen, and so forth. Well, who cares? They have precisely the same right to these designations as the pickpockets who are taken before the London police-magistrates have to the *aliases* which they assume. And if a Scotch *soi-disant* bishop chooses to wear an apron, what have we to do with that? He is just as much entitled to wear a bit of silk as any other old woman. But if he goes to the pulpit with a cap, then indeed we have some reason to complain; for all things considered, it is unjustifiable that the cap should not be provided with bells." The intemperate speech of this gentleman was succeeded by a very judicious and excellent one from Mr. Sheriff Tait, the brother of the Bishop of London; and the Assembly came to some decision which I remember appeared to me a sensible one, but I have not the faintest recollection what it was.

But the little incident gave a new direction to my thoughts, and set me thinking upon the singular phase of feeling which has prevailed for some years in the Scotch Church. The horror of Episcopal government and ritual which prevailed in the minds of the founders of the Kirk was indescribably great. Not far from my door is the burying-place of two men who were hanged

in the persecuting days ; and the inscription on the stone (which was often touched up by Old Mortality) states that they died to bear witness "against Tyranny, Perjury, and *Prelacy*." And in the mind of most Scotchmen then, and in the mind of the lower orders yet, Prelacy is held in precisely the estimation which you may infer from the connection in which it stands there. A liturgy and a bishop were regarded as emanations from the Devil. Yet now, singular to say, the Scotch Church contains a body of clergymen, considerable in point of numbers and pre-eminent in point of talent, which you would say at once had a strong Episcopal bias.

It would be invidious to mention names, but I venture to say that if you go to hear five out of six of our most distinguished preachers, you will find their prayers taken almost entirely from the Anglican liturgy, or from the writings of the men who drew up the Anglican liturgy. If you should happen to converse with the ablest and most cultivated of the Scotch clergy, you will find that the wish for a liturgy is deeply felt, and almost universal. I was informed within the last week that one of the most conspicuous of the parish clergymen of Edinburgh has compiled a liturgy for use in his own church, which he intends to print and place in the hands of the congregation. There is a strong and growing sense among the educated people of Scotland that the Reformation in this country went a great deal too far, that the ritual has been made repulsively bare and bald, and that many things were tabooed for their association with Popery, which formed no part of its essence, and are founded upon feelings and principles which are integral

parts of man's higher nature. There is a strong sense in this country that it was extremely absurd and wrong to refuse any recognition to the festivals of the Christian year. There is a very general wish for some prescribed form of the marriage and baptism service. There is an urgent demand for the introduction of a burial service; and indeed to any one who has often listened to the beautiful words of hope and consolation which in your country are breathed over a Christian grave, there is something inexpressibly revolting in the Scotch fashion of laying our friends down in their last resting-place without one Christian word, — without a syllable to tell in what belief we lay them there, or a prayer that we, when our day comes, "through the grave, and gate of death, may pass to our joyful resurrection." And there is a strong movement, which is rigidly opposed by the ignorant and prejudiced, towards true ecclesiastical architecture. Stained glass, which would have been smashed half a century ago, is common in large towns; and the use of the organ is evidently approaching. One hears it often wished that the congregation, who now sit silent through the entire service (except joining in the Psalms), should at least respond so far as to utter *Amen* at the end of the prayers; and very many of the clergy take pains to have the whole worship of God conducted with an order and decency which the generation before last would assuredly have thought carnal and legal abomination. The late Sir Henry Moncrief, who was minister of the West Church of Edinburgh, used to walk up to his pulpit every Sunday with his hat on his head, to testify to the grand Knoxite doctrine that no reverence is due to stone and lime; but any such pro-

ceeding now would excite just as much disgust for the pigheadedness of the individual that did it, in Scotland, as it would among you.

One hears occasionally of amusing instances of the pursuit of order under difficulties by the younger clergy. I heard of such a case the other day. The Scotch marriage service, you must know, is a very brief one. It is always performed by a single clergyman, who very rarely appears in canonicals. Two young clergymen, curates of a town in the west of Scotland, both (for I know them well) accomplished and able men, resolved to be the first to introduce a more imposing method. Accordingly, one of them having been asked to celebrate a marriage in town, both went to the place, arrayed in gown and band. One of them gave the very short address upon matrimonial duties which forms part of the service, and the other offered the prayers and received the declarations of the wedded couple. The parties, I believe, regard themselves as the only couple in Drumsleekie who ever were effectually and sufficiently married; but dire was the wrath of the true-blue Presbyterians of the place.

Now what is the meaning of all this? You must not fancy, my dear editor, that the Kirk of Scotland is growing ripe for amalgamation with the Church of England. Some members of what you might call the Episcopising party in the Scotch Church are really anxious for union with the Anglican Church; but by far the greater number of its adherents repudiate any such aim, and hold stoutly by Presbyterian Church-government. They say that they are striving for greater propriety and order in the worship of God; they maintain that although

Presbytery has generally been associated with an unliturgical worship and a bald ritual, there is no necessary connexion between them; and they hold that, without going the length of Episcopal government, they may borrow from the Anglican Church its architecture, its prayers, its baptismal and burial services. They will take, they say, whatever they think good in itself, without thinking it has been contaminated by the touch of Prelacy. The Puritan reformers, on the contrary, never thought of considering any right or usage on its own merits. The simple question was, Has this been observed in the Episcopal Church? And if it had been observed there, *that* was quite sufficient. Right or wrong, it was sent packing. It would amuse you to see how exactly many of the most evangelical of the Scotch clergy, who never fail to denounce Puseyism as something dreadful, have copied the every-day dress which we are accustomed to consider the mark of Puseyism. I look up now, and glance round the Assembly Hall. A few years ago, the regular Scotch clerical attire was a dress-coat and a waistcoat revealing abundance of linen. But now I see nothing but those silk waistcoats, buttoning to the throat, which I am told tailors designate as the *M. B.*, or Mark of the Beast; long frock-coats, many of them devoid of collars; plain white bands round the neck, devoid of tie of any kind; and cheeks from which the whiskers have been reaped. And did not that good old gentleman, Professor Robertson, when summoned in to take the chair of this Assembly, enter in full canonicals (which all moderators do), but wearing lavender kid gloves (which no moderator ever did before)? Some of the quaint old ministers from the Highlands shook

their heads at the sight, and hoped we might not all be Prelatists soon !

As to the advantage, and indeed the necessity, of a liturgy, I think there cannot be two opinions among unprejudiced men. If you had attended a Scotch church, as I have done, for ten years, you would know what a horrid thing it is to see a stupid, vulgar fellow entering the pulpit, and to think that *that* man is to interpret and express your deepest wants for that day's worship. It is, indeed, a very hard task for even an able, a pious, and a judicious man to make new prayers each Sunday, suited to convey the confessions, thanksgivings, and supplications of a congregation of his fellow-men ; yet I have known this so well and beautifully done, that for one day I did not miss the liturgy, dear to me as it is. But you cannot count for certain upon each one of twelve or fourteen hundred men being possessed of common sense ; and when you think of the painful and revolting consequences of allowing a blockhead to conduct public prayer at his own discretion, you will feel what a blessing it would be if some standard were put in the hands of the clergy that would assure us of decency. It is only just to say that the prayers one generally hears in Scotch churches are wonderfully respectable. They are sometimes, indeed, rather sermons or lectures than prayers ; and are spoken *at* the congregation rather than *to* the Almighty. And the truth is, that even in Scotland, where every minister prepares his own prayers, and where the prayers are very frequently *bonâ fide* extemporaneous, there is a sort of traditional liturgy ; a floating mass of stock phrases of prayer ; and each young man who goes into the Church takes up the kind of

strain which he has been accustomed to hear all his life, and carries it on. If you hear a decent, commonplace, rather stupid Scotch minister pray, every separate sentence of the prayer would fall quite familiarly on your ear, if you were a Scotchman. It is the regular old thing, only the component parts a little shuffled. Where the preacher is a senseless and tasteless boor, of course his prayers are in keeping. I have sometimes had an intense wish to throw something at the head of some vulgar blockhead who was pouring forth a tide of unintelligible balderdash, in the name of a congregation of plain country folk, who could not understand, and still less join in, one syllable of the effusion. To show you that I am not saying this without reason, I quote a passage from a review of a work, entitled *Eutaxia, or the Presbyterian Liturgies*, which appeared in a Scotch Church periodical edited by one of the most eminent of Scotch ministers:—

“What a contrast between these prayers of Calvin and the ungrammatical, unprayerful exhibitions which are sometimes heard in the pulpit! It would be a shame to many ministers to rush into the presence of their earthly superiors as they rush into the presence of their God. The prayers of many betray an utter want of preparation, and even of active thought at the time of their utterance, as is evident from the almost absurd phrases which have become stereotyped forms, and which are poured forth every Sabbath in our pulpits. We give one instance which we have no doubt all will recognize: “We come before Thee, with our hands on our mouths, and our mouths in the dust, crying out,” &c., while if one’s hand is either on his mouth, or his mouth in the dust, crying out is out of the question, and much more so if both happen at once. We recollect a worthy who was in the

## ABOUT SCOTCH AFFAIRS.

Habit of devoutly praying "that the time might soon when Satan should be sent far hence, even unto the skies"; and this is a type of too many of the stock phrases which are repeated in the sanctuary.\*

There is no respect in which Scotch prayers generally are so bad as in that most important article, the confession of sin. One would say that in such a case the simplest and most direct way of acknowledging unwholesomeness would be the fittest; we do not know anything better than the familiar "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done." But some preachers appear to think that confession should be set forth with sacred imagery, and accordingly express this part of prayer in terms which I believe convey no clear idea to plain people. I have often heard such sentences as the following:—

"We were planted as trees of righteousness, but we have yielded the grapes of Sodom, and the clusters of Gomorrah."

A still greater favorite is the following:—  
"We have turned away from the fountain of living waters; and we have hewn out to ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."

My final instance to show what prayer may come to, when intrusted, without any directory, to each individual of a great number of men, shall be the beginning of a prayer which, I was told by a thoroughly credible friend, he himself heard delivered from a Scotch pulpit:—

"O God, Thou hast made the sun. O God, Thou

\* *Edinburgh Christian Magazine*, p. 146, August, 1856.

hast made the moon. Thou hast made the stars. Thou hast also made the koamits, whech, in their eccentric oarbits in the immensity of space, occasionally approtch so neer the sun, that they are in imminent danger of being veetrifoyd."

I heartily wish, my dear editor, that you could send down to the Scotch Kirk a number of those clever, accomplished young Oxford and Cambridge men who wish to devote themselves to clerical labor, and who, from want of interest, will never get more than eighty pounds a year in the English Church. We can hold out pretty fair inducements to such; and we need them sorely. The Scotch Church furnishes a remarkable proof of the soundness of Sydney Smith's views, that if you cannot make all the livings of the Church prizes, it is better to have a proportion of prizes and many blanks, than to reduce all benefices to a decent mediocrity. True, Sydney's plan may not tend to secure the happiness of the working clergy, but it assuredly tends to lead a superior class of men to enter the Church, each man hoping that he may be so fortunate as to draw a prize. I have heard wretched trash talked, to the effect that the right course to get a disinterested and unworldly clergy is to offer no temporal inducements to choose the clerical profession; and when heritors resist a minister's getting an increase of his stipend (each minister is entitled to apply for what is called an *augmentation* every twenty years), they are accustomed to quote with high approval the dictum of some old noodle of a judge in past days, that "a *puir* (poor) church is a *pure* church." Nothing can be more absurd. Cut down the

livings of any church to what you choose, and you will have just as many men entering its service from mercenary motives as ever. All you will have secured will be that your recruits will be men of a lower class, to whom a smaller provision is an inducement. Fix all the livings of the Church of England at thirty pounds a year each, and you will have no lack of men eager to get them ; but they will be thirty pounds a year men.

Now, it is a fact which cannot be denied, that although there are very many exceptions to the statement, the majority of the Scotch clergy are drawn from the lower ranks of society, and many of them testify, by their appearance and their entire lack of that undefinable but keenly-felt quality which marks the *gentleman*, that they have not in any degree acquired that polish which the humblest origin is no bar against a man's attaining. As I look round this General Assembly, although the effect on the whole is good, and the principal places, with one or two exceptions, are filled by men fitted to adorn any circle of society, I yet am grieved to see here and there great loutish boors bursting out occasionally into horse-laughter, or apparently desirous of putting their hands and feet in their pockets, who never ought to have been in the Church, who cannot be supposed capable of maintaining the respect of even their humblest parishioners, and whom the squire of the parish would only make unhappy by asking to his table when he had anything but a second-chop party and entertainment.

Now, I say it most sincerely, God forbid that I should think less of a man of talent and piety, though of ever so humble origin. I must add, however, that so

far as my own experience has gone, the talent and piety and practical usefulness of the Church are found almost exclusively among its gentlemen. And you and I know well how much a man's manners affect the estimation in which the world holds him. You don't like to be told of your sins by a man whom nature made for blacking your boots; for I don't hesitate to assert that almost all these recruits from the lowest orders are as deficient in talent as they are in social standing. I do not like to think that the spiritual interests of the country are to be committed to an inferior class of men; and we know that Holy Writ speaks with no approval of ancient kings who "made priests of the lowest of the people." To show you that I am not singular in this feeling, I quote another passage from the article already referred to:—

"What can be more disgusting than to go into a church where the pews are filled with people of refinement, who are accustomed everywhere else to order and decency, and to see in the pulpit, the centre of attraction, the cynosure of eyes, the minister of God, a coarse vulgarian who ought to have remained in the sphere in which he was converted? Piety and earnestness make up for great defects; still, a clergyman, whether his parishioners be coalheavers, or the *élite* of a cultivated city, should always be a gentleman and a man of taste."\*

And now you will be surprised to be told that the livings of the Scotch Church average somewhat more than those of the Church of England. Ay, cast in your archbishoprics, bishoprics, deaneries, and rich rectories, then strike an average, apportioning an equal

\* *Edinburgh Christian Magazine*, p. 177, September, 1856. This magazine is (avowedly) edited by the Rev. Norman MacLeod, of Glasgow.

share to each cure of souls in England, and yet Scotland, with very few livings approaching a thousand a year, will yield a larger annual share to each of her charges. The average of the Kirk is, I am told, about two hundred and sixty pounds a year, with residence. And interest with patrons has little to do with a man's advance here. A young fellow, with a talent for popular preaching, may very reasonably expect, by the time he is seven or eight and twenty, to be settled in a snug manse, with an income of three or four hundred a year. Why is it that this does not tempt into clerical service those younger sons of gentlemen who are content to pinch themselves for years as briefless barristers, or ensigns and lieutenants tossed about the world with the chance of being shot, or clerks in government offices with an annual eighty pounds? The answer must be, that the Church can hold out nothing further. A man cannot get higher. The briefless barrister may be chief justice of England; the ensign may become a peer; the counting-house clerk, a millionaire. Not one in ten thousand will, but one in twenty thousand *must*; and each hopes that he himself is to be the lucky man. Now this, I take it, is one great advantage of Episcopacy. It provides aims for honorable ambition. It holds out prizes which induce men of first-class social position to enter the Church. A man of the highest talent may enter an episcopal church without feeling that he is practising the unworldly self-denial of a Martyr. Between ourselves, my dear friend, notwithstanding all we used to talk long ago at Oxford, I am quite satisfied that a church may be a church though it have no bishops; and notwithstanding my Anglican up-bring-

ing, I think it my duty, living in Scotland, to maintain (so far as I can) the church of the country; and in the Church of Scotland I shall be content to die. I am not sure, if I were a clergyman, that I should much like to be ordered about by some cross-grained, crotchety old gentleman, neither wiser, better, nor more learned than myself, even if he were my bishop. And yet I see great good in Episcopacy; and I see it all the more for having resided these years in Scotland. First, a church with gradations of rank provides prizes which draw in men of social standing; and so long as this is a world of snobs, even a church will be thought the more of for numbering in its ranks the sons of peers. And secondly, Episcopacy provides clergymen who rank on terms of equality with the highest classes in the country. I regard this last as a most important matter. If a lord asks a parish clergyman, however eminent he may be, — say that it were Chalmers himself, — to his house, why, the latent feeling on both sides is, that the peer is rather patronizing the parson; while if a duke entertains an archbishop, the nobleman receives an honor rather than confers one. And as the clergy will always be, to the vulgar mind, the embodiment or at least the representatives of the Church, that which improves or depresses *their* social standing affects the credit in which the Church will be commonly held, in a proportionate degree.

Now, as I have said, very many Scotch parsons are of the humblest possible extraction; and most of these individuals have had no opportunity of getting a little polished up. They have not the chance that a man has who is going into the Church of England. If a man

lives at Oxford for four or five years, and has his wits about him, he cannot but pick up some refinement from the class with whom he in some degree associates, and from the very air of the place. But if a man goes to Glasgow or St. Andrews a clodhopper, a clodhopper he remains to the end of his college course. While at the University he lives in a garret on oatmeal; he never mixes in decent society; he never sets foot in a drawing-room; he is completely shied by the small proportion of young men of the better ranks who are his class-fellows; he comes out into life a coarse, ungainly cub, with perhaps a certain vulgar talent which gets him a living at last. Then he goes out and drinks tea and whisky-toddy with the neighboring drovers and small farmers; he deals in coarse jests which make one long to kick him; he has an accurate knowledge of the points of an ox or pig; and is much gratified when a drunken grazier declares that "there's no a man goes to Whistle-binkie market that kens aboot a stot sae weel as Mr. Horrid-beast." He gains, for a time, a certain popularity with the lowest class; but he drives off the gentry of the parish to the nearest Episcopal chapel. I am sure you will agree with me, my friend, when I say that I regard it as self-evident that the parish priest ought to possess the bearing, manners, and feelings of a gentleman. He will be the better fitted for doing his duty well, even among the poorest. He will be the more respected; and if a clergyman is not respected, he is useless. The poorest bodies know thoroughly well when the minister is jack-fellow-alike, a man who may be presumed upon, and when *that* will not do. Nor does this imply a grain of affected stiffness, or the

very slightest lack of cordial kindness and sympathy upon the part of the real gentleman. On the contrary, it is the vulgar boor who will walk into a decent laborer's cottage with his hat on; who will keep its mistress standing while he sits; who will rudely say that the preparations for dinner which he sees are far too good for a family in such a position; who will abuse the poor toiling creature because her little girl had some cheap ribbons in her bonnet last Sunday at church; and say, with a coarseness beyond the pigsty, that working people, who may soon need aid from the parish, have no business with ornament, but should be thankful when they can find food to eat.\* I know, indeed, that among the heritors, — and every heritor with a fair rental is by courtesy a county gentleman, — some miserable creatures may be found who don't want to see the clergyman a gentleman; who feel that in *that* case, superior to themselves in education, ability, information, and probably in birth, he becomes the subject of a comparison in which they come off second-best. I have heard a retired tradesman, who had bought a property in the county, and been admitted to its society because his misplaced aspirates made him an amusing laughing-stock, lay down the principle that a clergyman would not work if he were made too well off. I have heard vulgar-minded, purse-proud upstarts, taken from the counter, and the oil-and-color way, say, with reference to a neighboring parson, that the Apostle Paul did not keep livery-servants or drive thorough-bred horses. I should never argue with any one who talked in this fashion. Leave such vulgarity to itself, and cut the

\* All these particulars are taken from life.

creature dead. But the unhappy thing is, that the social standing of the entire clerical order is injured by the underbred vulgarians who are found in the Church here and there ; men who cringe to the Pawtron, truckle to the laird, and sneak at the Heritors' meeting. I remember being struck by a passage in a speech made by the late Dr. Chalmers in this Assembly, in which he illustrates admirably the effect of the worldly standing of the clergy upon the moral estimation in which they will generally be held. He says :—

“ It is quite ridiculous to say that the worth of the clergy will suffice to keep them up in the estimation of society. This worth must be combined with importance. Give both worth and importance to the same individual, and what are the terms employed in describing him ? ‘ A distinguished member of society, the ornament of a most respectable profession, the virtuous companion of the great, and a generous consolation to all the sickness and poverty around him.’ These, Moderator, appear to me to be the terms peculiarly descriptive of the appropriate character of a clergyman, and they serve to mark the place which he ought to occupy ; but take away the importance, and leave only the worth, and what do you make of him ? what is the descriptive term applied to him now ? Precisely the term which I often find applied to many of my brethren, and which galls me to the very bone every moment I hear it, ‘ *a fine body* ’ ; a being whom you may like, but whom I defy you to esteem ; a mere object of endearment ; a being whom the great may at times honor with the condescension of a dinner, but whom they will never admit as a respectable addition to their society. Now all that I demand of the Court of Tiends is, to be raised, and that as speedily as possible, above the imputation of being ‘ *a fine body* ’ ; that they would add importance to my worth, and give splendor and efficacy to those exertions which have for their object the most exalted interests of the species.”

Capital sound sense, and accurate knowledge of the world there!

Such, my dear Editor, are certain meditations, reasonings, facts, statements, and opinions, which have beguiled me from weariness (though they may have had quite a contrary effect on you) during the less interesting business of several Assembly days. It was good in me to think of you (and perhaps of the intellectual circle for which you monthly cater), and to combine my attendance upon my duties here with doing something that may amuse or inform an absent but not forgotten friend. But now the Assembly is drawing to its close: it is past eleven o'clock on the evening of the 1st of June, and I must put my note-book in my pocket, and attend to the closing proceedings. Then to-morrow morning I shall be off homewards; and O, how pleasant the rush from glaring pavements, a stifling atmosphere, and tedious speeches, to the bright green fields and the thick leaves which I know await me. My home has seemed shadowy and far away during these days of occupation here; but now it is growing into reality again, as I think how a few hours are to take me back to it. I wonder how the horses are? I hope the dogs are all well. As for the children, I hear of their welfare daily; and I am taking with me a sufficient number of squeaking dogs, musical wagons, trumpets, and drums, to distract the nerves of a literary man for weeks to come. When shall we see you again? It cannot be too soon now.

Always your sincere friend,

C. A. MACDONALD.

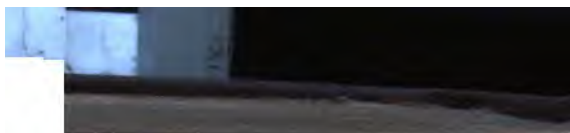


## CHAPTER XVII.

### FROM SATURDAY TO MONDAY.

**T**HERE are great people who have seen so much, that they are not surprised by anything. There are silly people who have not seen very much, but who think it a fine thing to pretend that they are not surprised by anything. As for the present writer, he has seen so little that he feels it very strange to find himself here; and he has not the least desire to pretend that he does not feel it so.

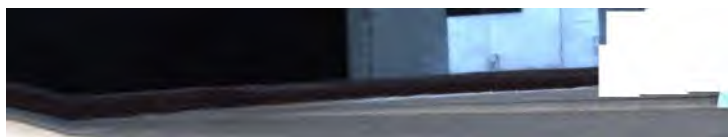
This morning the writer awoke in a bare little chamber, curtainless and carpetless, in that great hotel at Lucerne in Switzerland, which is called the *Schweizer Hof*. And having had breakfast in a very large and showy dining-room, along with two travelling companions, he is now standing at a window of that apartment, and looking out. Just in front, there spreads the green lake of Lucerne. Away to the left, is the Rigi; and to the right, beyond the lake, the lofty Pilatus, in a tarn on whose summit tradition says the banished governor of Judea drowned himself, stricken by conscience for his unjust condemnation of Christ. The town stands at this end of the lake; divided into two



parts by the river Reuss, which here flows out of the lake in a swift green stream, running with almost the speed of a torrent. There is a glare of light and heat everywhere in the town, most of all on the broad level piece of ground which at this point spreads between the lake and several hotels. On a rising ground, a few hundred yards off, rising steeply from the lake, stands the Roman Catholic cathedral, a somewhat shabby building, with two lofty slender spires at its west end. There are cloisters round it; and from several openings in the wall, on the side towards the lake, you have delightful peeps of the green water below, and of snow-capped hills beyond. If you enter that cathedral at almost any time, you will find its plain interior filled by a large congregation; and you will hear part of the service boisterously roared out by priests of unprepossessing aspect. Why do the Roman priests so furiously bellow?

This is a Saturday morning in August, — a beautiful bright morning.

There is no part of the week that is so well remembered by many people as the period from Saturday to Monday, including both the former and the latter days. That season of time has a character of its own; and many pleasant visits and expeditions have been comprised within it. Every one can sympathize with the poet Prior, and can understand the picture he calls up, when he describes himself as “in a little Dutch chaise on a Saturday night; on his left hand his Horace, and a friend on his right,” going out to the country to stay till Monday with the friend so situated. I fear, indeed, that Prior would not go to church on the Sun-

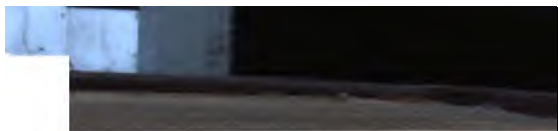


day, which I can only regret. But I am going to spend this time in a way as different as may be from that in which I am accustomed to spend it, or in which I ever spent it before.

When the writer arises on common Saturdays, the thing he has in prospect is several quiet hours spent in going over the sermons he has to preach on the following day. I suppose that most clergymen who do their work as well as they can, do on Saturday morning after breakfast walk into their study, and sit down in that still retreat to work. And if, on other days, you are thinking all the while you are at work there of ten sick people you have to see, and of a host of other matters that must be attended to out of doors, you will much enjoy the affluent sense of abundant time for thinking, which you will have if you make it a rule that on Saturdays you shall do no pastoral nor other parochial work. Then you ought to take a long walk in the afternoon, and give the evening to entire rest, refreshing your mind by some light, cheerful reading.

This advice, however, need not be prolonged; as it is addressed to a limited order of men, and to men who are not likely to take it. And to-day, instead of sitting down to work, there is something quite different to be done.

For it is time to cease looking out of the window at the Schweizer Hof, and to walk the short distance to the spot where a little steamer is preparing to start. The baggage of the three travellers is contained in three black leather bags of modest size. The steamer departs, and leaves the town behind; but to-day, instead of sailing the length of the lake, to where it ends amid



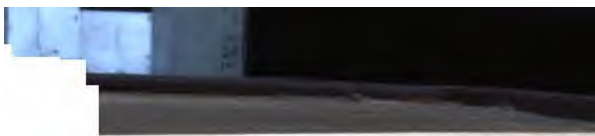
the wilds of Uri, we turn to the right hand into a retired bay, which gradually shallows, till the depth of water becomes very small. Pilatus is on the right, and the place where in former days there used to be the *Slide of Alpnach*. The sides of Pilatus are covered with great forests, the timber of which would be of great use if it could be readily got hold of. And the Slide was made for the purpose of bringing down great trees from spots from which any ordinary conveyance would be impossible. So a trough of wood was formed, eight miles in length, beginning high up the mountain, and ending at the lake. It was six feet wide, and four feet deep : a stream of water was made to flow through it, to lessen friction. It wound about to suit the ground, and was carried, bridge-like, over three deep ravines. The trees intended to be sent down by it were stripped of bark and branches, and then launched away. The biggest tree did the eight miles in six minutes, tearing down with a noise like thunder, an avalanche of wood. Sometimes a tree leapt out of the slide, in mid career, and was instantly smashed to atoms.

The steamer stops at a rude little wharf, near which a great lumbering diligence is waiting, very clumsy, but comfortable. Six horses draw it, whose harness, made mainly of rope, is covered with bells, that keep up a ceaseless tinkle as we go. In Britain, we wish a carriage to run as quietly as possible ; in Switzerland, they like a good deal of noise. We go slowly on, into the Canton of Unterwalden, by the little town of Sarnen, along a valley richly wooded. For a while, the road is level, then we begin to climb. And now, as is usual with British travellers, we get out and walk on, leaving



the diligence to follow. We are entering the Brunig Pass. In former days, it could be traversed only on foot or on mules; now a carriage road has been made, a marvel of skilful engineering. We walk up a long steep ascent. On the left hand, far below, are little green lakes, and scattered chalets; on the right, rude hills. Every here and there a little stream from the hills crosses the road. It is now a mere trickling thread of water; but acres on either side of it, covered with huge stones, testify what a raging torrent it must be in winter. So we go on, till we reach a spot where we are to witness a piece of ingenuity combined with bad taste. Turn out of the highway by a little path to the right, and you come in two hundred yards to a sawmill, driven by an impetuous little stream. Where does the stream come from? It seems to issue out of the rocky wall, which a quarter of a mile above the sawmill here crosses the little upland valley. You follow the stream towards its source. You reach the rocky wall. And there, sure enough, violently rushing out through a low-browed dark tunnel, which it quite fills, you see the origin of the stream. What is on the other side of the rocky wall?

Why, there is a considerable lake, which was once a great deal bigger. The Lake of Lungern was once a beautiful sheet of water, with fine wood coming down to its margin. But the people of the valley thought that, by partially draining the lake, they might get some hundreds of acres of valuable land, and all consideration of the picturesque had to give way. The tunnel we have seen lowered the water in the lake by a hundred and twenty feet, and diminished its size to half. With great labor, the work of nineteen thousand days given by the



peasants, the tunnel was made, beginning at its lower end, through the rocky ridge, to within six feet of the water at the end of the lake. These six feet of friable rock were blown up with gunpowder, fired by three daring men who instantly fled; and in a few minutes a black stream of mud and water appeared at the lower end of the tunnel. The traveller, returning by the sawmill to the road, goes on till he reaches the village, whence you may see a bare, ugly tract of five hundred acres, dotted with wooden chalets, gained by spoiling the lake.

Passing through the village, you climb on and on; the diligence makes no sign of overtaking you. You reach the summit at last, 3,600 feet above the sea; whence you have a grand view of the vale of Hasli. Those tremendous snowy peaks beyond are the peaks of the Wetterhorn, one of the grandest of the Alps. All this way the road has been very lonely, but always richly wooded. Now you begin to go down. The road winds along the side of the mountain, cut out of the rock. In some places it is a mere notch, with great masses of rock hanging over far beyond its outer edge. And so, broken by a pause for some bread and wine at a little wayside inn, the day goes on towards evening.

All this while, one is trying to feel that it is Saturday, the familiar day one knows at home; for somehow it seems quite different. And in this strange country, where you are a foreigner, you feel yourself quite a different person from what you used to be at home. No doubt, by having two travelling companions from Britain, you keep a little of the British atmosphere about you. If you were walking down now into Hasli all alone, you would be much more keenly aware of



the genius of the place. All your life and your interests at home would grow quite shadowy and unreal. But this is one thing that makes a holiday season in a foreign country deliver you so thoroughly from your home burden of care and labor. How very lightly the charge of one's parish rests upon one when the parish is a thousand miles away! The thing which at home is always pressing on you so heavily, grows light, at that distance, as one of those colored air-balls of India-rubber.

And now, as the light is fading somewhat, the great diligence, running swiftly down the hill, and zigzagging round perilous corners, with little exertion of the six plump horses, but with a tremendous jingling of their bells, overtakes us, and for a mile or two you may enjoy a pleasant rest after the long walk. We stop at a place where a roofed wooden bridge crosses the river, turning sharp off to the left. Here we leave the big diligence, and climb to the top of a lesser one which is waiting, a vast height. And now, in the growing darkness, we proceed slowly up the valley, following the course of the river Aar. On the right hand, huge precipices close in the valley, from which every now and then a streak of white foam, hundreds of feet in height, shows you a waterfall. It is perfectly silent, though these seem so near; they are much farther off than you are aware. On and on, up the river, till you can see lights ahead, and you jolt along a very roughly-paved street, where in the darkness you see picturesque wooden houses on either hand. This is Meyringen, one of the most thorough and beautiful Swiss villages to be found in Switzerland. What an odd Saturday evening this

seems! Our old ways of thinking and feeling are quite dislocated. We stop at the door of a large hotel, built of wood. Everything in it seems of wood, except the stone staircase. It is eight o'clock in the evening, — quite dark; they have not our long beautiful twilights there. And now we have dinner. Then we inspect a room filled with carved work in wood which is for sale, and select some little things which will pleasantly remind us of this place and time when both are far away. Finally, before ten o'clock, we climb the long stair, each to his little bare chamber, with many thoughts of those at home, and trying unsuccessfully to feel that this is Saturday night.

But the glory and beauty of Meyringen appeared the next morning, — one of the sunniest, calmest, and brightest Sundays that ever shone since the creation. You go forth from the hotel, and walk down the street, with the most picturesque wooden houses on either hand, with their projecting galleries and great overhanging eaves. Above, there is the brightest blue sky, and all round, snowy peaks, dazzling white, rising into the deep blue. Walk on till you are clear of the village, and fields of coarse grass spread round you; for you will not find there the soft green turf of Britain, but a rough, harsh grass, alive with crickets and grasshoppers. We have some compensation for our uncertain climate and abundant rain. Yet, amid that scenery so sublime, still, and bright, you do not miss anything that could be desired. And now, on the silent Sunday morning, I have no doubt that, of several men whom I saw, who though arrayed in mountain dress each wore a white neckcloth, each one was thinking of his own church many hundreds



Of miles off, and hoping and asking that all might go well there that day.

All round Meyringen there stand those snowy Alps. Let the small critic understand that we all know that an alp does not strictly mean a mountain, but a pasture high in the mountains. But in Britain, Alps mean mountains, and nothing else. And all round are those white peaks, save in the narrow opening where the Aar comes down from above, and where it rolls away below. From great precipices on the left hand as you look up the valley, streams descend in foamy falls; and one among these has sometimes brought down in its flood such masses of mud and gravel as served to overspread half the valley. Turn up this little street, at whose end you can see the church, which is a Protestant one. Eighteen feet from the pavement there is a line drawn on the inside walls, showing the height to which the church was once filled with mud by an overflow of that torrent. Service is going on. We quietly enter and steal to a seat by the door. A clergyman, in very ugly robes, is standing in the pulpit, which looks diagonally across the plain interior. He is reading his sermon in a rather sleepy way. His robe is of blue, and a great white collar, turned over, is round his neck. Here is the best place to see a whole congregation, men and women, in their national dress. The men sit on one side of the church and the women on the other. Swiss women are for the most part far from pretty. They wear here a black bodice, with white sleeves starched till they seem as stiff as boards, a yellow petticoat, and a little black hat. The church was well filled, and the people seemed to listen very attentively to their pastor's words.

But, for one thing, I do not understand them, for they are expressed in German; and for another thing, I am going to worship elsewhere, so I slip quietly away. Just at the gate through which you pass into the churchyard, there is a shabby little building which I took for a school. No, it is the *Little Church*; and here, during the summer and autumn, you may join in the service of the Church of England. A succession of clergymen come for a few weeks each. A little before the hour of worship we enter the building. It is just like a very shabby Scotch parish school. Forms without backs occupy the floor; at one corner there is an odd little enclosure which serves as a reading-desk and a pulpit; and a little way off there is placed a very small table, which is to-day covered with white, and bears the elements of the Communion. As the congregation assembles, five-and-twenty persons, the clergyman puts on his surplice, and entering the little desk begins the service. I cannot but admire the determination this young minister shows, even in that shabby place, to make the worship of God as decorous as may be. Although there was no organ, there was quite a musical service; even the Psalms being chanted remarkably well. Five or six young Englishwomen acted as a choir. The lessons were read by an old gentleman standing by the little communion table; but a second surplice was not forthcoming, and he was devoid of any robe. The sermon was a very decent one; not eloquent nor striking, but plain and earnest. I should have liked it better if the clergyman had prayed, before beginning it, in the words of one of the usual collects. But he simply prefaced his discourse by the words, "In the name of the Father and of the Son

and of the Holy Ghost;" and by that exceedingly silly Shibboleth, conveyed to me his adherence to a decaying party, which assuredly does not consist of the wisest or ablest of the Anglican clergy. There are, of course, two or three grand exceptions; but there is something fatuous in the parade of going as near Rome as may be, which some empty-headed youths exhibit. Let me add, that in the evening I went to service again. And now the sermon was so terribly bad, so weak and silly, that I found it hard to understand how any man who had brains to write the former discourse could possibly have produced it. Yet the text was one of the noblest in Holy Scripture.

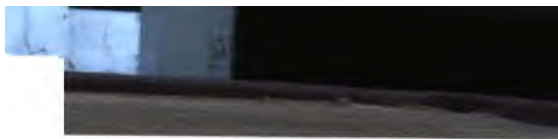
After the forenoon service, we walk along a great wall, built to defend the valley from floods, towards the heights on the left hand, looking up the valley; and in the hot afternoon toil slowly up and up, till Meyringen is left far below. What is that distant sound? Well, it is that of rifle-shooting; for the men of Hasli think Sunday afternoon the best time for practice. Let me confess that the perpetual reports broke in very sadly on the silence of the Holy Day. Yet there never was a nobler temple than that on which you looked, sitting down on a rock and gazing at the valley far below, and the snowy Alps beyond. You could not but think of the words, chanted in that morning service, "The strength of the hills is His also"! And sitting here, can one forget that at this hour the text is being read out in the church far away; can one help shutting out the Alps for a little, and asking that the Blessed Spirit may carry the words that are to be spoken to many hearts, for warning, counsel, and comfort? It is quite true, that

when at a distance of hundreds of miles, your home interests grow misty and unsubstantial; but it is likewise true that at such an hour as this they press themselves on one with a wonderful clearness and force. My friend Smith told me that in two hours' lonely walking under Mont Blanc, on a bright, clear autumn day, he felt more worried by some little perplexity which soon cleared itself up, than at any other time in his life. And sitting down on the edge of a glacier, whence a stream broke away in thunder, with the Monarch of Mountains looking down, all he could think of was that wretched little vexation.

The Sunday dinner hour at the *Sauvage* at Meyringen is four; so let us slowly descend from this height. A large party dines, chiefly English. The main characteristic of dinner was the fish called *lotte*, which is caught in the river near. There was a certain quietness becoming the day; and it was pleasant to remark that the greater number of our countrymen seemed to make Sunday a day of rest. And indeed it is inexpressibly pleasant, after the fatigue and hurry which attend travelling rapidly on through grand scenery, to have an occasional day on which to repose. And going to church, with a little congregation of one's countrymen and countrywomen, to join in the familiar service in a strange land, one felt something of that glow which came into St. Paul's heart, when after his voyage he was cheered by the sight of Christian friends, and which made him "thank God and take courage."

Then to the evening service, when the congregation was less, and the sermon so extremely bad. The setting sun was casting a rosy color upon the snowy peaks, as

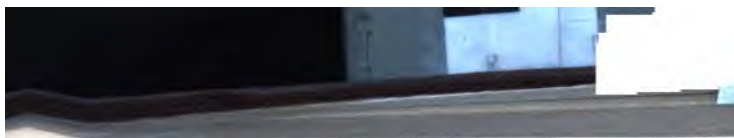
We returned to the only home one had there. And indeed Sunday is the worst day at an inn. There is a strongly felt inconsistency between the associations of the day, especially if you live in Scotland, and the whole look of the place. And sitting in a verandah behind the *Sauvage*, with the fragrance of the trees in the twilight coming up from the garden below, and looking across to the Falls of the Reichenbach on the other side of the valley, it was worrying to think of the weak sermon we had just heard, where one had hoped for that which might cheer and comfort and direct. On another day, in a church in a grander scene than even this, I sat beside a certain great preacher while a poor sermon was being preached with much attempt at oratorical effect, and thought how different it would have been had that man occupied the pulpit. Perhaps he thought so too, though he did not say so. But indeed, arrayed in garments of gray, and with a wideawake hat lying beside him, that eminent clergyman was like a locomotive engine when the steam is not up. He could not have preached then ; at least, not without two hours of previous thought. Before the best railway engine can dash away with its burden, you must fill its boiler with water, and kindle its fire. And when you may see that clergyman ascend his pulpit in decorous canonicals on a Sunday, charged with his subject, with every nerve tense, and with the most earnest purpose on his rather frightened face, to deliver his message to many hundreds of immortal beings ; if you had previously seen the easy figure in the light-gray suit sitting in a pew at Chamouni, you would discern a like difference to that between the engine standing cold and powerless in the



shed, and the engine coming slowly up to the platform, with the compressed strength of a thousand horses fretting for escape or employment, to take away the express train.

To-morrow morning we have to be up at half-past four ; so let us go to bed. First, let us have a look at the quiet street, indistinct in the twilight, and at the outline of encircling hills.

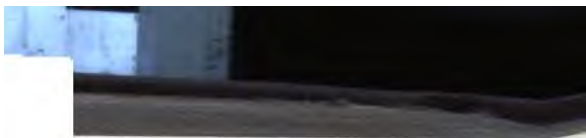
There are places in Switzerland where you do not sleep so well as might be desired. A host of wretched little enemies scarify your skin, and drive sleep from your eyes. The *Sauvage* at Meyringen is not one of these places. It is a thoroughly clean and respectable house. Yet for the guidance of tourists who may know even less than the writer (which is barely conceivable), let it be said that there is an effectual means of keeping such hostile troops away. Procure a quantity of camphor. Wear some of it in a bag about you, — a very little bag, — and even though you sit next a disgusting, infragant, unwashed person in a diligence, nothing will assail you. And at night rub a little of that material into powder between your palms, and sprinkle it over your bed, having turned back the bed clothes. Do that, and you are safe. If you rub yourself over with camphor besides, you are secure as though wrapped in triple brass. You have made yourself an offensive object to the æsthetic sensibilities of fleas, and they will reject you with contempt. They will do this, even though, uncamphored, you might be (in the South Sea Island sense) a *remarkably good man*. You remember how an Englishman once spoke to a chief of a tribe out there. He spoke of a certain zealous missionary. “ Ah,



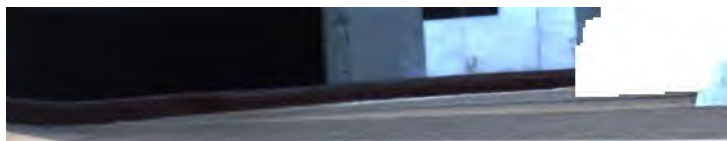
He was a very good man, a very good man," said the Englishman, truly and heartily. "Yes," said the chief, not so warmly; "him was a good man, but him was very tough!" The chief spoke with the air of one who says critically, "The venison at Smith's was not so good as usual last night." And the Englishman forbore to enquire as to the *data* on which the chief pronounced his judgment. No doubt he had experimental knowledge on that subject.

It is a great deal easier to get up in the dark at half past four in the morning in Switzerland than it is anywhere in Britain. There is something so bracing and exhilarating in the mountain air, that you are easily equal to exertion which would knock you up elsewhere. Men who at home could not walk five or six miles without fatigue, walk their thirty miles over a Pass without difficulty; come in to dinner with a good appetite; and after dinner, without the least of that feeling of stiffness which commonly follows any unusual exertion, are out of doors again, sauntering in the twilight, or visiting some sight that is within easy reach. Yesterday was a resting day with us, so to-day we had breakfast a little after five; and then, the three black leather bags being disposed on a black horse, that scrambled like a cat over ground that would have ruined an English steed's knees in the first quarter of a mile, we set off at six o'clock to cross the Pass of the Great Scheideck to Grindelwald.

First, along the road up the valley for a mile or so; then turn to the right, and begin to climb the mountain which on that side walls the valley in. The ascent is very steep, and the path consists of smooth and slippery



pieces of rock. You soon come to understand the wisdom of your guide, who requires you to walk at a very slow pace. *That* is your only chance, if you are to climb such ways for several successive hours. The inexperienced traveller pushes on at a rapid pace, and speedily is quite exhausted. After a little climbing, you may turn to the right, where you will see the torrent of the Reichenbach go down nearly two thousand feet in a succession of rapids and falls, hurrying to the Aar in the valley below. On, higher and higher, till you see the huge snowy mass of the Wetterhorn far before you on the left, and you enter a little plain of bright green grass, dotted with many picturesque wooden chalets. On, higher and higher, till you stop to rest and have something to eat at the baths of Rosenlauri, a pretty inn near a rock where the Reichenbach comes roaring out of a cleft. In a large room here, you will be tempted to buy specimens of wood-carving, very beautifully done. Having rested, you determine to make a little deviation from your way. Twenty minutes' stiff pulling up the steep hillside, over a very rough path to the left, and you cross a bridge that spans a fissure in the rock two hundred feet deep, where a little stream foams along. Now you stand beside the glacier of Rosenlauri, not large, but beautifully pure. A cave has been cut out for many yards into the beautiful blue ice, and into it you go. It is a singular place in which to find yourself, that cave, or rather tunnel, in the solid ice. The air is cold, the floor is somewhat wet; a soft light comes through the ice from without. But there is no time to linger unduly, and we return down the rough slope to the spot, near the inn, where



the guide and packhorse are waiting. Now, upwards again, by a very muddy path through a long wood of pines. But gradually the pines cease, and the ground grows bare, till you enter on a tract where the snow lies some inches deep. Parched as are your hands and your tongue, there is a great temptation to refresh both with handfuls of that snow, which in a little while will leave you more parched than ever. But after no long climbing on the snow, you reach the summit of the Pass, six thousand five hundred feet above the sea. Here you will find a little inn, the *Steinbock*, where a simple but abundant repast awaits the travellers. Thirty or forty, almost all English, sit down to copious supplies of stewed chamois, washed down with prodigious draughts of thin claret. Here you rest an hour. And going out, you look at the Wetterhorn, which rises in a perpendicular wall of limestone rock many thousand feet in height, beginning to rise apparently a hundred yards off. But your eye deceives you in this clear air and amid these tremendous magnitudes. The base of the precipice is more than a mile away. And when you begin to descend towards Grindelwald, the awful wall of rock seems to hang over you, though nowhere you approach within a mile of it. It is not safe to go nearer, for every now and then you hear a tremendous roar, and looking towards the Wetterhorn you see a mass of what looks like powdery snow sliding swiftly down the rock. You are astonished that so small a thing should make such a noise. But that is an avalanche; and if you were nearer, you would know that what seemed powdery snow was indeed hundreds of tons of ice, in huge blocks and masses. And if a village

of châteaux had stood in the way, that slide of powdery snow would have swept it to destruction.

It is a fact well known to students of physical philosophy, that it is incomparably easier to go down a steep hill than to ascend one. This is a result of the great and beneficial law of gravitation, according to which all material bodies tend towards the centre of the earth. And the consequence of this law is, that when we set off to descend from this height, we do it very easily and rapidly. A horse, indeed, looks a poor and awkward figure scrambling down these paths; but if you have in your hands that long, light, tough staff of ash shod with iron which is called an *Alpen-stock*, you will bound over the masses of rock at a great pace, doing things which in a less exhilarating air you would shrink from. All the way down on the left, apparently close by, there is that awful wall of the *Wetterhorn*, and you may see other peaks, of which the most noticeable or at least the most memorable is the *Schreckhorn*. By and by, by the path, you may discern a man standing beside a great square wooden box, like a small tub fixed on a stake of wood four or five feet high. And when the travellers approach, the man will fit to that box a wooden pipe eight feet long, and sticking his tongue into the lesser end of the pipe, will vehemently blow into it. That rude apparatus is the *Alpine horn*, of which you have heard folk talk and sing. There is nothing specially attractive to the ear, in the few notes brayed forth; but what grand echoes, doubled and redoubled, are awakened up in the breast of that huge wall, and die away in the upper air and mountain! Produce from your purse a liberal tip, and ask the mountaineer

to let you try his horn. You blow with all your might, like my friend Mac Puff sounding his own trumpet, but there is dead silence, as when to such as know him well Mac Puff does so sound; a feeble hissing of air from the great tub is all that rewards your labor. And one always respects a person who can do what one cannot do. Down along the slope, till, turning a little way to the left, you approach the Upper Glacier of Grindelwald, filling up the great gulf between the Wetterhorn and the Schreckhorn. Into this glacier you enter by an artificial tunnel; but the ice is dirty, and streams of water pour from it on your head. Thus you speedily retreat. Great belts of fir-trees fringe the glacier, which, like other glaciers, comes far below the snow-line. For as the ice which forms the glacier gradually melts away at the lower extremity next the valley, the ice from above presses on and fills its place. The glacier is in fact a slowly advancing stream of ice. And all the glaciers are gradually retreating into the mountains, as increasing cultivation and population make the lower extremity melt away somewhat faster than the waste can be supplied. Starting from far in the icy bosom of the Alps, in the region of perpetual snow, the Grindelwald glaciers come down to within a few yards of as green and rich grass as (if you were a cow) you would desire to eat.

Now we walk for an hour through meadows in the valley, pausing at a chalet to have some Alpine strawberries, small and flavorless; and so at five o'clock on Monday afternoon enter Grindelwald. The inns are filled with travellers; but we are lucky in finding space at the *Adler*, whose windows look full on the Lower

Glacier, at the distance of a mile. From a great black-looking cave at the end of the glacier, a river breaks away, of the dirty whity-brown water that comes from glaciers. It is a curious thing to see a river starting, full grown from the first. Look to the left of the lower end of the glacier, the ground meets the ice. Look to the right, and there a pretty big river, that looks as if it had burst out from the earth, is flowing away as if it had run a score of miles.

Let the traveller refresh himself by much-needed ablution; they give you pretty large basins here. And then descending, sit down to dinner at the *table-d'hôte*. A large party, almost all Germans. So are the waiters. Thus, if you express to a neighbor your conviction that something presented to you as chamois is in truth a portion of a very tough and aged goat, no offence is given.

Shall it be recorded how, after dinner, we sat in the twilight on a terrace hard by, looking at the glacier and the Alps; how, as it darkened down, we entered the dining-room again, and there beheld, seated at tea, a certain great Anglican prelate? Shall it be recorded how, if one had never seen nor heard of him before, you might have learned something of his eloquence, geniality, and tact, transcending those of ordinary men, even from that hour and a half before he retired to rest? Shall it be recorded how, having begun to tell a story to his own party, he gradually and easily, as he discerned others listening with interest, addressed himself to them, till he ended his story in the audience of all in that large chamber? And shall it be recorded how two pretty young English girls sat and gazed with rapt and

silent admiration on the great man's face? Two or three young fellows who had sought during that day to commend themselves to these fair beings felt themselves (you could see) hopelessly eclipsed and cut out, and regarded the unconscious bishop with looks of fury. Happily he did not know, so it did him no harm.

My friend Mac Spoon recently dilated, in my hearing, on the advantages of Pocket Diaries; which (as wise men know) are not records of passing and past events, but memoranda of engagements. "You note down in these," said he, "all you have to do; while yet if your book should be lost, and so fall into the hands of a stranger, he could not for his life understand the meaning of your inscriptions. Thus," he went on, "you see how under the head of Thursday, April 32d, 1864, I have marked *Jericho Train at 10.30*. Now if *that* were to fall into a stranger's possession, he could make nothing of it, he would not know what it meant at all. But as for me, the moment I look at it, I know that it means that on Thursday, April 32d, 1864, I am to go to Jericho by the 10.30 train." Such were the individual's words. And now, for the sake of those readers who could not understand that mysterious inscription, I think it expedient distinctly to declare, that the reason why this history is called *From Saturday to Monday* is, that it gives an account of historical events, beginning with Saturday and ending on Monday. And thus, having reached Monday evening (for soon after the bishop's story everybody went to bed), my task is done. It can never transpire, what happened on the Tuesday. Perhaps something happened of great public interest. But if I were to record it here, then it would appear as if

what occurred on Tuesday occurred between Saturday and Monday, which is absurd.

The remembrance of foreign travel is pleasanter than the travel itself. For in remembrance there are none of the hosts that are dispelled by copious camphor; no wear of the muscles, nor of the lungs and heart; no eyes hot and blinded with the sunshine on the snow; no parched throat and leathery tongue; no old goat's flesh disguised as chamois venison. The little drawbacks are forgot; but the absence of care and labor, the blue sky and the bright sun, glacier and cataract, and the snowy Alps, remain.





## CONCLUSION.

**I**T is the way of Providence, in most cases, gradually to wean us from the things which we must learn to resign; and it has been so with this holiday-time, now all but ended. It is not now what it was when we came here. The leaves wore their summer green when we came, now they have faded into autumn russet and gold. The paths are strewn deep with those that have fallen; and even in the quiet sunshiny afternoon, some bare trees look wintry against the sky. Like the leaves, the holiday-time has faded,—it is outgrown. The appetite for work has revived, and all of us now look forward with as fresh interest to going back to the city to work as we once did to coming away from the city to rest and play.

We have been weaned by slow degrees. Nature is hedging us in. The days are shortening fast; the breeze strikes chill in the afternoons as they darken. The sea sometimes feels bitter, even though you enter it head foremost. Nor have there lacked days of ceaseless rain and of keen north wind. Two lighthouses, one casting fitful flashes across the water and one burning with a steady light, become great features of the scene

by seven o'clock in the evening. A little later, there is a line of lights that stretches for miles at the base of the dark hills along the opposite shore ; indoor occupations have supplanted evening walks ; yet a day or two, and those lights will no more be seen. The inhabitants of the dwellings they make visible will have returned to the great city, and very many of the pretty cottages and houses will remain untenanted through the long winter-time.

As these last days are passing, one feels the vague remorse which is felt when most things draw to an end. One feels as if we might have made more of this time of quiet amid these beautiful hills. Surely we ought to have enjoyed the place and the time more ! Thus we are disposed to blame ourselves, but to blame ourselves unjustly. You would be aware of the like tendency, parting from almost anything, no matter how much you had made of it. You will know the vague remorse when dear friends die, thinking you ought to have been kinder to them ; you will know it, though you did for them all that could be done by mortal. And when you come to die, my friend, looking back on the best-spent life, you will think how differently you would spend it were it to be spent again. You will feel as if your talent had been very poorly occupied, and doubtless with good reason, here.

Last night, there was a magnificent sunset. You saw the great red ball above the mountains, visibly going down. It was curious to watch the space between the sun and the dark ridge beneath it lessening moment by moment, till the sun slowly sunk from sight.

Of course, he had been approaching his setting just as fast all day as in those last minutes above the horizon; but there was something infinitely more striking about the very end. At broad noonday, it is not so easy to fully take in the great truth which Dr. Johnson had engraved on the dial of his watch, that he might be often reminded of it, — the solemn *Νὺξ γὰρ ἔρχεται*. It is in the last minutes that we are made to think that we ought to have valued the sun more when we had him, and valued more the day he measured out.

Day by day this volume has grown up through this holiday-time. In its earlier portion, the author diligently revised the chapters you have read. And by and by, the leisurely postman brought the daily pages of pleasing type, in which things look so different from what they look in the cramped magazine printing. Great is the enjoyment which antique ornaments and large initial letters afford to a simple mind.

And now it is the forenoon of our last day here; we go early to-morrow morning. Play-time is past, and work-time is to begin. I hear voices outside, and the pattering of little feet; there are the sea and the hills; and all the place is pervaded by the sound of the waves. On no day through our time here did the place look as it does now; it wears the peculiar aspect which comes over places from which you are parting. How fast the holidays have slipped away! And what a beautiful scene this is! What a pretty little Gothic church it is, in which for these Sundays that are gone the writer has taken part of the duty; how green the ivy on the cliffs, and the paths through the woods; what perpetual life in that ceaseless fluctuation of which you seldom lose

sight for long! But we must all set our faces to the months of work once more, thankful to feel fit for them; not without some anxiety in the prospect of them; looking for the guidance and help of that kindest Hand which has led through the like before.





## LEISURE HOURS IN TOWN







# LEISURE HOURS IN TOWN

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
THE RECREATIONS OF A COUNTRY PARSON

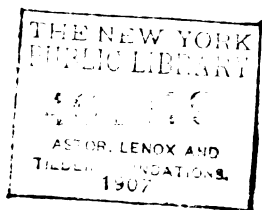
*by Andrew Kennedy Hutchison Boyd*

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.

1878.





# CONTENTS.

## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
CONCERNING THE PARSON'S LEISURE HOURS IN TOWN	7

## CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING VEAL; A DISCOURSE OF IMMATURITY	16
--	----

## CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THINGS SLOWLY LEARNT	57
---------------------------------	----

## CHAPTER IV.

GONE	93
------	----

## CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING PEOPLE OF WHOM MORE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE	103
--	-----

## CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING PEOPLE WHO CARRIED WEIGHT IN LIFE: WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON THOSE WHO NEVER HAD A CHANCE	138
--	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

COLLEGE LIFE AT GLASGOW	172
-------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING THE WORLD'S OPINION, WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON COWED PEOPLE	210
---	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

	PAGE
CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD . . . .	244

## CHAPTER X.

THE ORGAN QUESTION IN SCOTLAND . . . . .	274
--	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

THORNDALE; OR, THE CONFLICT OF OPINIONS . . . .	295
---	-----

## CHAPTER XII.

CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER . . . .	334
--	-----

## CHAPTER XIII.

OULITA THE SERF . . . . .	371
---------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIV.

SCOTCH PECULIARITIES . . . . .	405
--------------------------------	-----

---

CONCLUSION . . . . .	435
----------------------	-----



## CHAPTER I.

### CONCERNING THE PARSON'S LEISURE HOURS IN TOWN.

**T**HIS is Friday evening. It has been a gloomy November day. And now, about nine o'clock, I hear the wind moaning as if there were to be a stormy night. But the fire is blazing, and the curtains are drawn: and here, in this little room, once the study of a wit and a poet, things are almost as quiet as if it were miles away from the great city in which it is. You might hear an occasional shout, from a street which is not far distant: and I am aware of a sound which appears to originate in the beating of carpets in the lane behind this row of houses. But the door-bell, which rings perpetually in the forenoon, and very frequently in the evening, is not likely to be rung any more to-night by any one whose business is with me: and no humble parishioner, interrupting the thread of one's thoughts, is likely to come now upon his little errand to his minister. This is indeed an hour of leisure: and oh, what a rest and relief such an hour is, to the man who has it only now and then!

Both my sermons for Sunday are ready; and they are in a drawer in this table on which I write. I have seen, I believe, every sick person in the congregation on some day during this week. As for the parish, *that* is by far

too large and populous to be personally overtaken by any single clergyman ; but I have the great comfort of being aided by a machinery of district visitation, which does not suffer one poor person in the parish to feel that he is forgotten in his parish church. I cannot, at this moment, think of any one matter of ministerial duty which demands instant attention : though of course I have the vague sense, which I suppose will never be absent, that there are many duties impending ; many things which Monday morning at the latest will bring. Surely, then, if such are ever to come in a large town parish, here is one of my leisure hours.

When a country parson, leaving a little rustic cure, undertakes the charge of such a parish, if he be a man whose heart is in his work, he is quite certain greatly to overwork himself. It is indeed a total change, from the quiet of a country parish, where dwellings are dotted singly here and there, with great fields between them, to the town, where street after street of tall houses is filled with your parishioners, all entitled to some measure of your care and thought. And with that change, there comes a sudden acceleration of the wheels of life. You begin to live in a hurry. Your mind gets into a feverish state. You live under a constant feeling of pressure. You think, while you are doing anything, that something else is waiting to be done. It need not be said that such a feeling is, with most men, quite fatal to doing one's best : more particularly with the pen. And if you be of an anxious temperament, the time never comes in which you can sit down and rest, feeling that your work is done. You sit down sometimes and rest, through pure fatigue and exhaustion : but all the while you are thinking of something else which demands to be done, and which you

---

are anxious to do. You will often wish for the precious power possessed by some men, of taking things easily you may even sometimes sigh for the robust resolution of Lord Chancellor Thurlow. "I divide my work," he said, "into three parts. Part I do: part does itself: and part I leave undone." But many men could not for their lives resolve to do this last. They go with a hearty will at their work, till body and mind break down.

There is no work so hard, to a conscientious man, as that which he may make as easy or as hard as he chooses. It is a great blessing to have one's task set; and to be able to feel, when you have done it, that your work is done, and that you may rest with a clear conscience. But in the Church, *that* can never be. There is always something more that might be done. What clergyman can say that he has done for the good of his parish all that is possible for man to do; — that there is no new religious or benevolent agency which by energy yet more unsparring might be set in operation? It may here be said, that I do not in any degree approve the system of trying to dragoon people, whether poor or rich, into attention to their religious duties and interests, which is attempted by some good people whose zeal exceeds their discretion: and that I have no fancy for making a church, what with perpetual meetings, endless societies, and ever-recurring collections of money for this and that purpose, look like nothing so much as a great cotton-mill, with countless wheels whirring away, and dazing the brain by their ceaseless motion. It is fit to recognize the fact, that the poorest folk are responsible beings; and that intelligent artisans will not submit to be treated like children, even by people who wish to make them good chil-

dren. And you know that a boy, who has learnt to swim by the aid of corks and bladders, is very apt to sink when that support is taken away. His power of swimming is not worth much. It seems to me to be even so with that form of religion, which can be kept alive only by a constant series of visits, exhortations, tracts, and week-day church-services. I venture to judge no man: but give me, say I, not the sickly exotic, but the hearty evergreen, that can bear frosts and winds. But the faithful clergyman, even trying to hold this principle in view, will find, in a large parish in a great city, work that would occupy him profitably, were each of his days as long as a week, and had he the strength of half a score of men. I firmly believe, that almost all the clergymen I know do day by day their very utmost to overtake that overwhelming duty. And now and then, there comes a special sense of the clergyman's weighty responsibility, and of the momentous consequences that may depend upon his exertions: and under that stimulus, resolving "to spend and be spent" in the work to which he has given himself, you will find him laboring in a fashion that endangers health and life.

Now, it is not right to do *that*. Even setting apart the consideration of the duty he owes his children, his duty to the Church is to work in that fashion in which he may hope to labor longest and most efficiently. And that fashion is not the breathless and feverish one. Yet nothing but constant watchfulness and firmness can prevent the town clergyman's life from growing one of chronic hurry and weariness. It is not merely his preaching, and his preparation for preaching: but the other calls of duty are innumerable. Pound after pound is added, till the camel labors along with weary foot: or

even till the camel's back is broken. It is the rule in large towns, so far as I have known them, that the clergy shall be overwrought. Not that they are overdriven by the unreasonable expectations of their parishioners; though that may sometimes be the case: but that they are spurred on by the exactions of their own conscience. Then, every now and then, you will find one making a stand against this over-pressure: feeling that he is breaking down; and determining that he must have some leisure. You will find him beginning to take an hour's daily walk; or resolutely setting himself to maintain some acquaintance with the literature of the day. You will find him resolving to see a little of his fellow-creatures, besides what he sees of them in the way of his duty; and wondering if many men know what it is to feel, for days together, every word they speak an effort, and almost every step they walk. But all this is as when you determine to break yourself of the bad habit of walking too fast. You are walking along at five miles an hour. You pull up, and resolve you shall walk slowly. You set off at a moderate pace. But in a few minutes you cease to think of the rate at which you are progressing: and in a quarter of an hour you find of a sudden that you are going on at your old unreasonable speed again.

Going through your duty at this high pressure, you will, in a few months, find what will follow. Your brain gets fevered: your mind is confused: you cannot take a calm and deliberate view of any large subject: and by degrees your heart (I speak literally, not morally) tells you that this will not do. You seem almost to have lost the power of sleeping. And you find, that if you are to live and labor much longer in this world, you must do

one of two things: either you must go back again to the country, or you must make a definitive arrangement that you shall have some appreciable amount of leisure in town. You may probably find, on looking back, that for a long time you have had none at all: except, indeed, in that autumnal holiday, which will not suffice to keep up for a whole year's work: and whose good effect you have probably used up within three weeks after its close. Yes, you must have leisure: a little of it every day: a half-holiday at least once a week. And I do not call it satisfactory leisure, when, at the close of a jading day, you sit down, wearied beyond talking, reading, or thinking: and feeling the presence even of your children too much for your shaken nerves. I call it leisure, when you can sit down in the evening, tired indeed, but not exhausted beyond chasing your little boy or girl about the lobby, and thinking of the soft green turf of quieter days. I call it leisure to sit down in your easy-chair by the fireside, and to feel that you may peacefully think, and dream if you please: that you may look vacantly into the fire: that you may read the new review or magazine by little bits: that you may give your mind total rest. And to this end, let us fix it in our remembrance, that all our Master requires of us is to do what we can: and that if after we have done our utmost, there still remains much more we would wish to do, we must train ourselves to look at it without disquiet, even as we train ourselves to be submissive in the presence of the inexplicable mysteries and the irremediable evils which are inherent in the present system of things. No doubt, it is hard to do this; but it is the clergyman's duty to do it. You have no more right to commit suicide by systematically overtasking your constitution, than by swifter and coarser

means. Life is given to you as a trust to make the best of; and probably the worst you can make of it is to cut it short, or to embitter it by physical exhaustion and depression.

I dare say many clergymen with large parishes have known what it is to delight in a day of dreadful rain and hurricane: I mean a day when chimney-pots and slates are flying about the streets; and when no question can be raised, even by the most exacting moral sense, as to whether it is possible to go out or not. A forenoon of leisure comes so very seldom, that it is very precious and enjoyable when it comes. The leisure hours commonly attainable are in the evening. If you sit at your desk from ten o'clock in the morning till one or two in the afternoon: and if you then go out to your pastoral work till six: you may very fairly lay it down as a general rule, that at six the day's work shall be deemed over. In addition to this, it may be well to make the afternoon of Saturday a time of recreation. You will be much fitter for your Sunday work, which implies a good deal of physical fatigue as well as mental wear. And I begin to doubt if it be good or safe to begin the round of labor again on Monday after breakfast: and to think that possibly as much work would be done, and better done, if the forenoon of that day were given to recruiting one's energies after the Sunday duty. And I am not claiming these seasons of leisure for the clergymen, merely for Aristotle's reason: merely because "the end of work is to enjoy leisure:" merely because leisure is pleasant, and the hard-working parson has earned it fairly. I think not merely of the pleasure of the pastor, but of the profit of the flock. I do not think it expedient that a Christian congregation should get almost all its relig-

ious instruction from a fevered and overdriven mind. I have been struck, in listening to the preaching of one or two very able and very laborious friends, by a certain lack of calmness and sobriety of thought: by a something that reminded one of the atmosphere of a hot-house, and that seemed undefinably inconsistent with the realities of daily life. And it seemed to me that all this came of the fact, that they lived, worked, and wrote, in chronic excitement and hurry.

I trust that my non-clerical readers will pardon all this professional matter: it is a comfort to talk out one's mind even to friends whom one will never see. I dare say discerning folk will know, that the writer has been describing his own constant temptation; and that, however needful he may feel these seasons of rest to be, it is only now and then that he can train himself to take them. And he has found that nothing gives the mind more effectual rest, than change of employment. You have heard, doubtless, of that mill-horse, which all days of the week but Sunday was engaged in walking round and round a certain narrow circle. You may remember what was the Sunday's occupation of that sagacious creature. An unthinking person might have surmised that the horse, which had perpetually to walk on working days, would have chosen on its day of rest to lie still and do nothing. But the horse knew better. It spent Sunday in walking round and round, in the opposite direction from that in which it walked on week-days. It found rest, in short, not in idleness; but in variation of employment. I commend that horse. I have tried to do something analogous to what it did. These essays have been to me a pleasant change, from the writing of many sermons. And even in leisure hours, if it be (as

Sydney Smith said) "the nature of the animal to write," the pen will be taken up naturally and habitually.

I can say sincerely, that more important duties have never been postponed to the production of these chapters: and I please myself with the belief, that the hands into which this volume is likely to fall, will not be those of total strangers. You may perhaps find, my friendly reader, that these essays of an old friend, whom you knew in the days when he was a country parson, have somewhat changed their character, in consistence with his total change of life. But I have reason to cherish a quiet trust, that they have done good to some of my fellow-creatures. I suppose the like happens to all authors, who write in sincerity and in kindness of heart: but I cannot forget what numbers of men and women, otherwise unknown, from either side of the Atlantic, have cheered and encouraged the writer, sometimes in weary hours, by thanking him for some little good impression left by these pages upon heart and life. I have not been able to forego the great delight of trying to produce what might afford some pleasure and profit to friends far beyond the boundaries of my parish: nor have I been able to think that it was my duty to do so.



## CHAPTER II.

### CONCERNING VEAL:

#### A DISCOURSE OF IMMATURITY.

**T**HE man who, in his progress through life, has listened with attention to the conversation of human beings; who has carefully read the writings of the best English authors; who has made himself well acquainted with the history and usages of his native land; and who has meditated much on all he has seen and read; must have been led to the firm conviction that by VEAL, those who speak the English language intend to denote the flesh of calves; and that by a calf is intended an immature ox or cow. A calf is a creature in a temporary and progressive stage of its being. It will not always be a calf; if it live long enough, it will assuredly cease to be a calf. And if impatient man, arresting the creature at that stage, should consign it to the hands of him whose business it is to convert the sentient animal into the impassive and unconscious meat, the nutriment which the creature will afford will be nothing more than immature beef. There may be many qualities of Veal; the calf which yields it may die at very different stages in its physical and moral development; but provided only it die as a calf — provided only that its

meat can fitly be styled Veal — *this* will be characteristic of it, that the meat shall be immature meat. It may be very good, very nutritious and palatable; some people may like it better than beef, and may feed upon it with the liveliest satisfaction; but when it is fairly and deliberately put to us, it must be admitted even by such as like Veal the best, that Veal is but an immature production of nature. I take Veal, therefore, as the emblem of IMMATURITY; of that which is now in a stage out of which it must grow; of that which, as time goes on, will grow older, will probably grow better, will certainly grow very different. *That* is what I mean by Veal.

And now, my reader and friend, you will discern the subject about which I trust we are to have some pleasant and not unprofitable thought together. You will readily believe that my subject is not that material Veal which may be beheld and purchased in the butcher's shops. I am not now to treat of its varied qualities, of the sustenance which it yields, of the price at which it may be procured, or of the laws according to which that price rises and falls. I am not going to take you to the green fields in which the creature which yielded the veal was fed, or to discourse of the blossoming hawthorn hedges from whose midst it was reft away. Neither shall I speak of the rustic life, the toils, cares, and fancies of the farm-house near which it spent its brief lifetime. The Veal of which I intend to speak is Moral Veal, or (to speak with entire accuracy), Veal Intellectual, Moral, and *Æsthetical*. By Veal I understand the immature productions of the human mind; immature compositions, immature opinions, feelings, and tastes. I wish to think of the work, the views, the fancies, the emotions, which

are yielded by the human soul in its immature stages ; while the calf (so to speak) is only growing into the ox ; while the clever boy, with his absurd opinions and feverish feelings and fancies, is developing into the mature and sober-minded man. And if I could but rightly set out the thoughts which have at many different times occurred to me on this matter, if one could catch and fix the vague glimpses and passing intuitions of solid unchanging truth, if the subject on which one has thought long and felt deeply were always that on which one could write best, and could bring out to the sympathy of others what a man himself has felt, what an excellent essay this would be ! But it will not be so ; for as I try to grasp the thoughts I would set out, they melt away and elude me. It is like trying to catch and keep the rainbow hues you have seen the sunshine cast upon the spray of a waterfall, when you try to catch the tone, the thoughts, the feelings, the atmosphere of early youth.

There can be no question at all as to the fact, that clever young men and women, when their minds begin to open, when they begin to think for themselves, do pass through a stage of mental development which they by and by quite outgrow ; and entertain opinions and beliefs, and feel emotions, on which afterwards they look back with no sympathy or approval. This is a fact as certain as that a calf grows into an ox, or that veal, if spared to grow, will become beef. But no analogy between the material and the moral must be pushed too far. There are points of difference between material and moral Veal. A calf knows it is a calf. It may think itself bigger and wiser than an ox, but it knows it is not an ox. And if it be a reasonable calf, modest, and

### CONCERNING VEAL.

free from prejudice, it is well aware that the joints will yield after its demise, will be very different from those of the stately and well-consolidated ox which ruminates in the rich pasture near it. But the human boy often thinks he is a man, and even more than a man. He fancies that his mental stature is as big and as solid as it will ever become. He fancies that his mental productions—the poems and essays he writes, the political and social views he forms, the moods of feeling with which he regards things—are just what they may always be, just what they ought always to be. If spared in this world, and if he be one of those whom years make wiser, the day comes when he looks back with amazement and shame on those early mental productions. He discerns now how immature, absurd, and extravagant they were; in brief, how vealy. But at the time, he had not the least idea that they were so. He had entire confidence in himself; not a misgiving as to his own ability and wisdom. You, clever young student of eighteen years old, when you wrote your prize essay, fancied that in thought and style it was very like Macaulay; and not Macaulay in that stage of vealy brilliancy in which he wrote his essay on *Milton*, not Macaulay the fairest and most promising of calves, but Macaulay the stateliest and most beautiful of oxen. Well, read over your essay now at thirty, and tell us what you think of it. And you, clever, warm-hearted, enthusiastic young preacher of twenty-four, wrote your sermon; it was very ingenious, very brilliant in style, and you never thought, but that it would be felt by mature-minded Christian people as suiting their case, as true to their inmost experience. You could not see why you might not preach as well as a man of forty. And if people in middle age

had complained that, eloquent as your preaching was, they found it suited them better and profited them more to listen to the plainer instructions of some good man with gray hair, you would not have understood their feeling; and you might perhaps have attributed it to many motives rather than the true one. But now, at five-and-thirty, find out the yellow manuscript, and read it carefully over; and I will venture to say, that if you were a really clever and eloquent young man, writing in an ambitious and rhetorical style, and prompted to do so by the spontaneous fervor of your heart and readiness of your imagination, you will feel now little sympathy even with the literary style of that early composition; you will see extravagance and bombast where once you saw only eloquence and graphic power. And as for the graver and more important matter of the thought of the discourse, I think you will be aware of a certain undefinable shallowness and crudity. Your growing experience has borne you beyond it. Somehow you feel it does not come home to you, and suit you as you would wish it should. It will not do. That old sermon you cannot preach now, till you have entirely recast and rewritten it. But you had no such notion when you wrote the sermon. You were satisfied with it. You thought it even better than the discourses of men as clever as yourself, and ten or fifteen years older. Your case was as though the youthful calf should walk beside the sturdy ox, and think itself rather bigger.

Let no clever young reader fancy from what has been said, that I am about to make an onslaught upon clever young men. I remember too distinctly how bitter and indeed ferocious I used to feel, about eleven or twelve years ago, when I have heard men of more than middle

age and less than middling ability speak with contemptuous depreciation of the productions and doings of men considerably their juniors, and vastly their superiors; describing them as *boys*, and as *clever lads*, with looks of dark malignity. There are few more disgusting sights, than the envy and jealousy of their juniors, which may be seen in various malicious, commonplace old men; as there is hardly a more beautiful and pleasing sight than the old man hailing, and counselling, and encouraging the youthful genius which he knows far surpasses his own. And I, my young friend of two-and-twenty, who relatively to you, may be regarded as old, am going to assume no preposterous airs of superiority. I do not claim to be a bit wiser than you; all I claim is to be older. I have outgrown your stage; but I was once such as you, and all my sympathies are with you yet. But it is a difficulty in the way of the essayist, and, indeed, of all who set out opinions which they wish to be received and acted on by their fellow-creatures, that they seem, by the very act of offering advice to others, to claim to be wiser and better than those whom they advise. But in reality it is not so. The opinions of the essayist or of the preacher, if deserving of notice at all, are so because of their inherent truth, and not because he expresses them. Estimate them for yourself, and give them the weight which you think their due. And be sure of this, that the writer, if earnest and sincere, addressed all he said to himself as much as to any one else. This is the thing which redeems all didactic writing or speaking from the charge of offensive assumption and self-assertion. It is not for the preacher, whether of moral or religious truth, to address his fellows as outside sinners, worse than himself, and needing to be reminded of that of which he does not need to be re-  
-20

minded. No, the earnest preacher preaches to himself as much as to any in the congregation ; it is from the picture ever before him in his own weak and wayward heart, that he learns to reach and describe the hearts of others, if indeed he do so at all. And it is the same with lesser things.

It is curious and it is instructive to remark how heartily men, as they grow towards middle age, despise themselves as they were a few years since. It is a bitter thing for a man to confess that he *is* a fool ; but it costs little effort to declare that he *was* a fool, a good while ago. Indeed, a tacit compliment to his present self is involved in the latter confession ; it suggests the reflection what progress he has made, and how vastly he has improved, since then. When a man informs us that he was a very silly fellow in the year 1851, it is assumed that he is not a very silly fellow in the year 1861. It is as when the merchant with ten thousand a year, sitting at his sumptuous table, and sipping his '41 claret, tells you how, when he came as a raw lad from the country, he used often to have to go without his dinner. He knows that the plate, the wine, the massively elegant apartment, the silent servants so alert yet so impassive, will appear to join in chorus with the obvious suggestion, "You see he has not to go without his dinner now !" Did you ever, when twenty years old, look back at the diary you kept when you were sixteen ; or when twenty-five at the diary you kept when twenty ; or at thirty, at the diary you kept when twenty-five ? Was not your feeling a singular mixture of humiliation and self-complacency ? What extravagant, silly stuff it seemed that you had thus written five years before ! What Veal ; and oh what a self he must have been who wrote it ! It is a difficult

question, to which the answer cannot be elicited, Who is the greatest fool in this world? But every candid and sensible man of middle age, knows thoroughly well the answer to the question, Who was the greatest fool that he himself ever knew? And after all, it is your diary especially if you were wont to introduce into it poetical remarks and moral reflections, that will mainly help you to the humiliating conclusion. Other things, some of which I have already named, will point in the same direction. Look at the prize essays you wrote when you were a boy at school; look even at your earlier prize essays written at college (though of these last I have something to say hereafter); look at the letters you wrote home when away at school or even at college, especially if you were a clever boy, trying to write in a graphic and witty fashion; and if you have reached sense at last (which some, it may be remarked, never do), I think you will blush even through the unblushing front of manhood, and think what a terrific, unutterable, conceited, intolerable blockhead you were. It is not till people attain somewhat mature years that they can rightly understand the wonderful forbearance their parents must have shown in listening patiently to the frightful nonsense they talked and wrote. I have already spoken of sermons. If you go early into the Church, say at twenty-three or twenty-four, and write sermons regularly and diligently, you know what landmarks they will be of your mental progress. The first runnings of the stream are turbid, but it clears itself into sense and taste month by month and year by year. You wrote many sermons in your first year or two; you preached them with entire confidence in them, and they did really keep up the attention of the congregation in a remarkable way. You

accumulate in a box a store of that valuable literature and theology, and when by and by you go to another parish, you have a comfortable feeling that you have a capital stock to go on with. You think that any Monday morning when you have the prospect of a very busy week, or when you feel very weary, you may resolve that you shall write no sermon that week, but just go and draw forth one from the box. I have already said what you will probably find, even if you draw forth a discourse which cost much labor. You cannot use it as it stands. Possibly it may be structural and essential Veal: the whole framework of thought may be immature. Possibly it may be Veal only in style; and by cutting out a turgid sentence here and there, and above all, by cutting out all the passages which you thought particularly eloquent, the discourse may do yet. But even then, you cannot give it with much confidence. Your mind can yield something better than that now. I imagine how a fine old orange-tree, that bears oranges with the thinnest possible skin and with no pips, juicy and rich, might feel that it has outgrown the fruit of its first years, when the skin was half an inch thick, the pips innumerable, and the eatable portion small and poor. It is with a feeling such as *that* that you read over your early sermon. Still, mingling with the sense of shame, there is a certain satisfaction. You have not been standing still; you have been getting on. And we always like to think *that*.

What is it that makes intellectual Veal? What are the things about a composition which stamp it as such? Well, it is a certain character in thought and style hard to define, but strongly felt by such as discern its presence

at all. It is strongly felt by professors reading the compositions of their students, especially the compositions of the cleverest students. It is strongly felt by educated folk of middle age, in listening to the sermons of young pulpit orators, especially of such as think for themselves, of such as aim at a high standard of excellence, of such as have in them the makings of striking and eloquent preachers. Dull and stupid fellows never deviate into the extravagance and absurdity which I specially understand by Veal. They plod along in a humdrum manner : there is no poetry in their soul ; none of those ambitious stirrings which lead the man who has in him the true spark of genius to try for grand things and incur severe and ignominious tumbles. A heavy dray-horse, walking along the road, may possibly advance at a very lagging pace, or may even stand still ; but whatever he may do, he is not likely to jump violently over the hedge, or to gallop off at twenty-five miles an hour. It must be a thorough-bred who will go wrong in that grand fashion. And there are intellectual absurdities and extravagances which hold out hopeful promise of noble doings yet : the eagle, which will breast the hurricane yet, may meet various awkward tumbles before he learns the fashion in which to use those iron wings. But the substantial goose, which probably escapes those tumbles in trying to fly, will never do anything very magnificent in the way of flying. The man who in his early days writes in a very inflated and bombastic style, will gradually sober down into good sense and accurate taste, still retaining something of liveliness and eloquence. But expect little of the man who as a boy was always sensible, and never bombastic. *He* will grow awfully dry. *He* is sure to fall into the unpardonable sin of tiresomeness. The rule

has exceptions; but the earliest productions of a man of real genius are almost always crude, flippant, and affectedly smart; or else turgid and extravagant in a high degree. Witness Mr. Disraeli; witness Sir E. B. Lytton; witness even Macaulay. The man who as a mere boy writes something very sound and sensible, will probably never become more than a dull, sensible, commonplace man. Many people can say, as they bethink themselves of their old college companions, that those who wrote with good sense and good taste at twenty, have mostly settled down into the dullest and baldest of prozers; while such as dealt in bombastic flourishes and absurd ambitiousness of style, have learned as time went on to prune their early luxuriances, while still retaining something of raciness, interest, and ornament.

I have been speaking very generally of the characteristics of Veal in composition. It is difficult to give any accurate description of it that shall go into minuter details. Of course it is easy to think of little external marks of the beast — that is, the calf. It is Veal in style when people, writing prose, think it a fine thing to write *o'er* instead of *over*, *ne'er* instead of *never*, *poessie* instead of *poetry*, and *methinks* under any circumstances whatsoever. References to the heart are generally of the nature of veal, also allusions to the mysterious throbings and yearnings of our nature. The word *grand* has of late come to excite a strong suspicion of Veal; and when I read the other day in a certain poem something about a *great grand man*, I concluded that the writer of that poem is meanwhile a great grand calf. The only case in which the words may properly be used together is in speaking of your great grandfather. To talk about

*mine* affections, meaning *my* affections, is Veal; and *mine bonnie love* was decided Veal, though it was written by Charlotte Brontë. To say *mayhap*, when you mean *perhaps*, is Veal. So is it also to talk of human *ken*, when you mean human *knowledge*. To speak of *something higher and holier* is invariably Veal: and it is usually Veal to speak of *something deeper*. *Wife mine* is Veal, though it stands in *The Caxtons*. I should rather like to see the man who in actual life is accustomed to address his spouse in that fashion. To say *Not, oh never*, shall we do so and so, is outrageous Veal. *Sylvan grove* or *sylvan vale* in ordinary conversation is Veal. The word *glorious* should be used with caution; when applied to trees, mountains, or the like, there is a strong suspicion of Veal about it. But one feels that in saying these things we are not getting at the essence of Veal. It is Veal in thought that is essential Veal, and *that* is very hard to define. Beyond extravagant language, beyond absurd fine things, it lies in a certain lack of reality and sobriety of sense and view — in a certain indefinable jejuneness in the mental fare provided, which makes mature men feel that somehow it does not satisfy their cravings. You know what I mean better than I can express it. You have seen and heard a young preacher, with a rosy face and an unlined brow, preaching about the cares and trials of life. Well, you just feel at once he knows nothing about them. You feel that all this is at second-hand. He is saying all this because he supposes it is the right thing to say. Give me the pilot to direct me who has sailed through the difficult channel many a time himself! Give me the friend to sympathize with me in sorrow, who has felt the like. There is a hollowness, a certain want, in the talk about much trib-

ulation of the very cleverest man who has never felt any great sorrow at all. The great force and value of all teaching lie in the amount of personal experience which is embodied in it. You feel the difference between the production of a wonderfully clever boy and of a mature man when you read the first canto of *Childe Harold* and then read *Philip van Artevelde*. I do not say but that the boy's production may have a liveliness and interest beyond the man's. Veal is in certain respects superior to beef, though beef is best on the whole. I have heard vealy preachers whose sermons kept up breathless attention. From the first word to the last of a sermon which was unquestionable Veal, I have witnessed an entire congregation listen with that audible hush you know. It was very different indeed from the state of matters when a humdrum old gentleman was preaching, every word spoken by whom was the maturest sense, expressed in words to which the most fastidious taste could have taken no exception; but then the whole thing was sleepy; it was a terrible effort to attend. In the case of the Veal there was no effort at all. I defy you to help attending. But then you sat in pain. Every second sentence there was some outrageous offence against good taste; every third statement was absurd or overdrawn or almost profane. You felt occasional thrills of pure disgust and horror, and you were in terror what might come next. One thing which tended to carry all this off was the manifest confidence and earnestness of the speaker. He did not think it Veal that he was saying. And though great consternation was depicted on the faces of some of the better educated people in church, you could see that a very considerable part of the congregation did not think it Veal either. There can be no

doubt, my middle-aged friend, if you could but give your early sermons now with the confidence and fire of the time when you wrote them, they would make a deep impression on many people yet. But it is simply impossible for you to give them; and if you should force yourself some rainy Sunday to preach one of them, you would give it with such a sense of its errors, and with such an absence of corresponding feeling, that it would fall very flat and dead. Your views are maturing: your taste is growing fastidious; the strong things you once said you could not bring yourself to say now. If you *could* preach those old sermons, there is no doubt they would go down with the mass of uncultivated folk, — go down better than your mature and reasonable ones. We have all known such cases as that of a young preacher who, at twenty-five, in his days of Veal, drew great crowds to the church at which he preached; and who at thirty-five, being a good deal tamed and sobered, and in the judgment of competent judges vastly improved, attracted no more than a respectable congregation. A very great and eloquent preacher lately lamented to me the uselessness of his store of early discourses. If he could but get rid of his present standard of what is right and good in thought and language, and preach them with the enchainning fire with which he preached them once! For many hearers remain immature, though the preacher has matured. Young people are growing up, and there are people whose taste never ripens beyond the enjoyment of Veal. There is a period in the mental development of those who will be ablest and maturest, at which vealy thought and language are accepted as the best. Veal will be highly appreciated by sympathetic calves; and the greatest men, with rare exceptions, are calves in youth, while

many human beings are calves forever. And here I may remark, as something which has afforded me consolation on various occasions within the last year, that it seems unquestionable that sermons which are utterly revolting to people of taste and sense, have done much good to large masses of those people in whom common sense is most imperfectly developed, and in whom taste is not developed at all; and accordingly, wherever one is convinced of the sincerity of the individuals, however foolish and uneducated, who go about pouring forth those violent, exaggerated, and all but blasphemous discourses of which I have read accounts in the newspapers, one would humbly hope that a Power which works by many means, would bring about good even through an instrumentality which it is hard to contemplate without some measure of horror. The impression produced by most things in this world is relative to the minds on which the impression is produced. A coarse ballad, deficient in rhyme and rhythm, and only half decent, will keep up the attention of a rustic group to whom you might read from *In Memoriam* in vain. A waistcoat of glaring scarlet will be esteemed by a country bumpkin a garment every way preferable to one of aspect more subdued. A nigger melody will charm many a one who would yawn at Beethoven. You must have rough means to move rough people. The outrageous revival-orator may do good to people to whom Bishop Wilberforce or Dr. Caird might preach to no purpose; and if real good be done, by whatever means, all right-minded people should rejoice to hear of it.

And this leads to an important practical question, on which men at different periods of life will never agree.

*When* shall thought be regarded as mature? Is there a standard by which we can ascertain beyond question whether a composition be Veal or Beef? I sigh for fixity and assurance in matters æsthetical. It is vexatious that what I think very good my friend Smith thinks very bad. It is vexatious that what strikes me as supreme and unapproachable excellence, strikes another person at least as competent to form an opinion, as poor. And I am angry with myself when I feel that I honestly regard as inflated commonplace and mystical jargon, what a man as old and (let us say) nearly as wise as myself thinks the utterance of a prophet. You know how, when you contemplate the purchase of a horse, you lead him up to the measuring-bar, and there ascertain the precise number of hands and inches which he stands. How have I longed for the means of subjecting the mental stature of human beings to an analogous process of measurement! Oh for some recognized and unerring gauge of mental calibre! It would be a grand thing if somewhere in a very conspicuous position — say on the site of the National Gallery at Charing-cross — there were a pillar erected, graduated by some new Fahrenheit, on which we could measure the height of a man's mind. How delightful it would be to drag up some pompous pretender who passes off at once upon himself and others as a profound and able man, and make him measure his height upon that pillar, and understand beyond all cavil what a pigmy he is! And how pleasant, too, it would be to bring up some man of unacknowledged genius, and make the world see the reach of his intellectual stature! The mass of educated people even are so incapable of forming an estimate of a man's ability, that it would be a blessing if men could be sent out into the world with the stamp upon them,

telling what are their weight and value, plain for every one to see. But of course there are many ways in which a book, sermon, or essay, may be bad without being Veal. It may be dull, stupid, illogical, and the like, and yet have nothing of boyishness about it. It may be insufferably bad, yet quite mature. Beef may be bad, and yet undoubtedly beef. And the question now is, not so much whether there be a standard of what is in a literary sense good or bad, as whether there be a standard of what is Veal and what is Beef. And there is a great difficulty here. Is a thing to be regarded as mature when it suits your present taste; when it is approved by your present deliberate judgment? For your taste is always changing: your standard is not the same for three successive years of your early youth. The Veal you now despise you thought Beef when you wrote it. And so, too, with the productions of other men. You cannot read now without amazement the books which used to enchant you as a child. I remember when I used to read Hervey's *Meditations* with great delight. That was when I was about five years old. A year or two later I greatly affected Macpherson's translation of Ossian. It is not so very long since I felt the liveliest interest in Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy*. Let me confess that I retain a kindly feeling towards it yet; and that I am glad to see that some hundreds of thousands of readers appear to be still in the stage out of which I passed some years since. Yes, as you grow older your taste changes: it becomes more fastidious; and especially you come to have always less toleration for sentimental feeling and for flights of fancy. And besides this gradual and constant progression, which holds on uniformly year after year, there are changes in mood and taste sometimes from day

to day and from hour to hour. The man who did a very silly thing thought it was a wise thing when he did it. He sees the matter differently in a little while. On the evening after the battle of Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington wrote a certain letter. History does not record its matter or style. But history does record that some years afterwards the Duke paid a hundred guineas to get it back again; and that on getting it he instantly burnt it, exclaiming that when he wrote it he must have been the greatest idiot on the face of the earth. Doubtless, if we had seen that letter, we should have heartily coincided in the sentiment of the hero. He *was* an idiot when he wrote it, but he did not think that he was one. I think, however, that there is a standard of sense and folly; and that there is a point at which Veal is Veal no more. But I do not believe that thought can justly be called mature only when it has become such as to suit the taste of some desperately dry old gentleman with as much feeling as a log of wood, and as much imagination as an oyster. I know how intolerant some dull old fogies are of youthful fire and fancy. I shall not be convinced that any discourse is puerile because it is pronounced such by the venerable Dr. Dryasdust. I remember that the venerable man has written many pages, possibly abundant in sound sense, but which no mortal could read, and to which no mortal could listen. I remember that though that not very amiable individual has outlived such wits as he once had, he has not outlived the unbecoming emotions of envy and jealousy; and he retains a strong tendency to evil-speaking and slandering. You told me, unamiable individual, how disgusted you were at hearing a friend of mine who is one of the best preachers in Britain, preach one of his finest sermons. Perhaps you

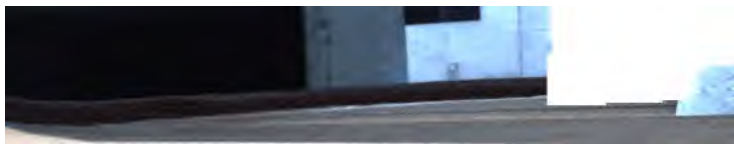
really were disgusted : there is such a thing as casting pearls before swine, who will not appreciate them highly. But you went on to give an account of what the great preacher said ; and though I know you are extremely stupid, you are not quite so stupid as to have actually fancied that the great preacher said what you reported that he said : you were well aware that you were grossly misrepresenting him. And when I find malice and insincerity in one respect I am ready to suspect them in another : and I venture to doubt whether you were disgusted. Possibly, you were only ferocious at finding yourself so unspeakably excelled. But even if you had been really disgusted ; and even if you were a clever man ; and even if you were above the suspicion of jealousy ; I should not think that my friend's noble discourse was puerile because you thought it so. It is not when the warm feelings of earlier days are dried up into a cold, time-worn cynicism, that I think a man has become the best judge of the products of the human brain and heart. It is a noble thing when a man grows old, retaining something of youthful freshness and fervor. It is a fine thing to ripen without shrivelling : to reach the calmness of age, yet keep the warm heart and ready sympathy of youth. Show me such a man as *that*, and I shall be content to bow to *his* decision whether a thing be Veal or not. But as such men are not found very frequently, I should suggest it as an approximation to a safe criterion, that a thing may be regarded as mature when it is deliberately and dispassionately approved by an educated man of good ability, and above thirty years of age. No doubt a man of fifty may hold that fifty is the age of sound taste and sense : and a youth of twenty-three may maintain that he is as good a judge of human doings now

as he will ever be. I do not claim to have proposed an infallible standard. I give you my present belief, being well aware that it is very likely to alter.

It is not desirable that one's taste should become too fastidious, or that natural feeling should be refined away. And a cynical young man is bad, but a cynical old one is a great deal worse. The cynical young man is probably shamming; he is a humbug, not a cynic. But the old man probably *is* a cynic, as heartless as he seems. And without thinking of cynicism, real or affected, let us remember that though the taste ought to be refined and daily refining, it ought not to be refined beyond being practically serviceable. Let things be good; but not too good to be workable. It is expedient that a cart for conveying coals should be of neat and decent appearance. Let the shafts be symmetrical, the boards well-planed, the whole strong yet not clumsy; and over the whole let the painter's skill induce a hue rosy as beauty's cheek, or dark-blue as her eye. All *that* is well; and while the cart will carry its coals satisfactorily, it will stand a good deal of rough usage, and it will please the eye of the rustic who sits in it on an empty sack, and whistles as it moves along. But it would be highly inexpedient to make that cart of walnut of the finest grain and marking, and to have it French-polished. It would be too fine to be of use; and its possessor would fear to scratch it; and would preserve it as a show, seeking some plainer vehicle to carry his coals. In like manner, do not refine too much either the products of the mind, or the sensibilities of the taste which is to appreciate them. I know an amiable professor very different from Dr. Dryadust. He was a country clergyman; a very interesting plain preacher. But when he got his chair, he had

to preach a good deal in the college chapel; and by way of accommodating his discourses to an academic audience, he re-wrote them carefully; rubbed off all the salient points; cooled down whatever warmth was in them to frigid accuracy; toned down everything striking. The result was that his sermons became eminently classical and elegant; only they became impossible to attend to, and impossible to remember. And when you heard the good man preach, you sighed for the rough and striking heartiness of former days. And we have all heard of such a thing as taste refined to that painful sensitiveness, that it became a source of torment; that is, unfitted for common enjoyments and even for common duties. There was once a great man, let us say at Melipotamus, who never went to church. A clergyman once in speaking to a friend of the great man, lamented that the great man set so bad an example before his humbler neighbors. "How *can* that man go to church," was the reply; "his taste and his entire critical faculty, is sharpened to that degree, that in listening to any ordinary preacher, he feels outraged and shocked at every fourth sentence he hears, by its inelegance or its want of logic; and the entire sermon torments him by its unsymmetrical structure, its want of perspective in the presentment of details, and its general literary badness." I quite believe that there was a moderate proportion of truth in the excuse thus urged; and you will probably judge that it would have been better had the great man's mind not been brought to so painful a polish.

The mention of dried-up old gentlemen reminds one of a question which has sometimes perplexed me. Is it Veally to feel or to show keen emotion? Is it a precious result and indication of the maturity of the human mind,



to look as if you felt nothing at all? I have often looked with wonder, and with a moderate amount of veneration, at a few old gentlemen whom I know well, who are leading members of a certain legislative and judicial council, held in great respect in a country of which no more need be said. I have beheld these old gentlemen sitting apparently quite unmoved when discussions were going on in which I knew they felt a very deep interest, and when the tide of debate was setting strongly against their peculiar views. There they sat, impassive as a Red Indian at the stake. I think of a certain man, who, while a smart speech on the other side is being made, retains a countenance expressing actually nothing; he looks as if he heard nothing, felt nothing, cared for nothing. But when the other man sits down, he rises to reply. He speaks slowly at first, but every weighty word goes home and tells: he gathers warmth and rapidity as he goes on, and in a little you become aware that for a few hundred pounds a year, you may sometimes get a man who would have made an Attorney-General or a Lord Chancellor; you discern that under the appearance of almost stolidity, there was the sharpest attention watching every word of the argument of the other speaker, and ready to come down on every weak point in it; and the other speaker is (in a logical sense) pounded to jelly by a succession of straight-handed hits. Yes, it is a wonderful thing to find a combination of coolness and earnestness. But I am inclined to believe that the reason why some old gentlemen look as if they did not care, is that in fact they don't care. . . . And there is no particular merit in looking cool while a question is being discussed, if you really do not mind a rush which way it may be decided. A keen, unvarying, engrossing regard for one's self, is a great

safeguard against over-excitement in regard to all the questions of the day, political, social, and religious.

It is a curious but certain fact, that clever young men, at that period of their life when their own likings tend towards Veal, know quite well the difference between veal and beef; and are quite able, when necessary, to produce the latter. The tendency to boyishness of thought and style may be repressed, when you know you are writing for the perusal of readers with whom *that* will not go down. A student of twenty, who has in him great talent, no matter how undue a supremacy his imagination may meanwhile have, if he be set to producing an essay in Metaphysics to be read by professors of philosophy, will produce a composition singularly free from any trace of immaturity. For such a clever youth, though he may have a strong bent towards Veal, has in him an instinctive perception that it *is* Veal; and a keen sense of what will and will not do for the particular readers he has to please. Go, you essayist who carried off a host of university honors; and read over now the prize essays you wrote at twenty-one or twenty-two. I think the thing that will mainly strike you will be, how very mature these compositions are; how ingenious, how judicious, how free from extravagance, how quietly and accurately and even felicitously expressed. *They* are not Veal. And yet you know, that several years after you wrote them you were still writing a great deal which was Veal beyond all question. But then a clever youth can produce material to any given standard; and you wrote the essays not to suit your own taste, but to suit what you intuitively knew was the taste of the grave and even

smoke-dried professors who were to read them and sit in judgment on them.

And though it is very fit and right that the academic standard should be an understood one, and quite different from the popular standard, still it is not enough that a young man should be able to write to a standard against which he in his heart rebels and protests. It is yet more important that you should get him to approve and adopt a standard which is accurate, if not severe. It is quite extraordinary what bombastic and immature sermons are preached in their first years in the Church by young clergymen who wrote many academic compositions in a style the most classical. It seems to be essential that a man of feeling and imagination should be allowed fairly to run himself out. The course apparently is, that the tree should send out its rank shoots, and then that you should prune them, rather than that by some repressive means you should prevent the rank shoots coming forth at all. The way to get a high-spirited horse to be content to stay peaceably in its stall, is to allow it to have a tearing gallop, and thus get out its superfluous nervous excitement and vital spirit. Let the boiler blow off its steam. All repression is dangerous. And some injudicious folk, instead of encouraging the highly-charged mind and heart to relieve themselves by blowing off in excited verse and extravagant bombast, would (so to speak) sit on the safety valve. Let the bursting spring flow ! It will run turbid at first ; but it will clear itself day by day. Let a young man write a vast deal : the more he writes, the sooner will the Veal be done with. But if a man write very little the bombast is not blown off ; and it may remain till advanced years. It seems as if a certain quantity of fustian must be blown off before you reach the

good material. I have heard a mercantile man of fifty read a paper he had written on a social subject. He had written very little save business letters all his life. And I assure you that his paper was bombastic to a degree that you would have said was barely tolerable in a youth of twenty. I have seldom listened to Veal so outrageous. You see he had not worked through it in his youth; and so here it was now. I have witnessed the like phenomenon in a man who went into the Church at five-and-forty. I heard him preach one of his earliest sermons, and I have hardly ever heard such boyish rodомontade. The imaginations of some men last out in liveliness longer than those of others; and the taste of some men never becomes perfect; and it is no doubt owing to these things that you find some men producing Veal so much later in life than others. You will find men who are very turgid and magniloquent at five-and-thirty, at forty, at fifty. But I attribute the phenomenon in no small measure to the fact that such men had not the opportunity of blowing off their steam in youth. Give a man at four-and-twenty two sermons to write a week, and he will very soon work through his Veal. It is probably because ladies write comparatively so little, that you find them writing at fifty poetry and prose of the most awfully romantic and sentimental strain.

We have been thinking, my friend, as you have doubtless observed, almost exclusively of intellectual and æsthetical immaturity, and of its products in composition, spoken or written. But combining with that immaturity, and going very much to affect the character of that Veal, there is moral immaturity, resulting in views, feelings, and conduct, which may be described as Moral Veal.

But indeed it is very difficult to distinguish between the different kinds of immaturity; and to say exactly what in the moods and doings of youth proceeds from each. It is safest to rest in the general proposition that, even as the calf yields Veal, so does the immature human mind yield immature productions. It is a stage which you outgrow, and therefore a stage of comparative immaturity, in which you read a vast deal of poetry, and repeat much poetry to yourself when alone, working yourself up thereby to an enthusiastic excitement. And very like a calf you look when some one suddenly enters the room in which you are wildly gesticulating or moodily laughing, and thinking yourself poetical and indeed sublime. The person probably takes you for a fool; and the best you can say for yourself is that you are not so great a fool as you seem to be. Vealy is the period of life in which you filled a great volume with the verses you loved; and in which you stored your memory, by frequent reading, with many thousands of lines. All that you outgrow. Fancy a man of fifty having his commonplace book of poetry! And it will be instructive to turn over the ancient volume, and to see how year by year the verses copied grew fewer, and finally ceased entirely. I do not say that all growth is progress; sometimes it is like that of the muscle which once advanced into manly vigor and usefulness, but is now ossifying into rigidity. It is well to have fancy and feeling under command: it is not well to have feeling and fancy dead. That season of life is vealy in which you are charmed by the melody of verse quite apart from its meaning. And there is a season in which that is so. And it is curious to remark what verses they are that have charmed many men. For they are often verses in which no one

else could have discerned that singular fascination. You may remember how Robert Burns has recorded that in youth he was enchanted by the melody of two lines of Addison's :—

For though in dreadful whirls we hung,  
High on the broken wave.

Sir Walter Scott felt the like fascination in youth (and he tells us it was not entirely gone even in age), in Mickle's stanza :—

The dews of summer night did fall;  
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,  
Silvered the walls of Cumnor Hall,  
And many an oak that grew thereby.

Not a remarkable verse, I think. However, it at least presents a pleasant picture. But I remember well the enchantment which, when twelve years old, I felt in a verse by Mrs. Hemans, which I can now see presents an excessively disagreeable picture. I saw it not then ; and when I used to repeat that verse, I know it was without the slightest perception of its meaning. You know the beautiful poem called the *Battle of Morgarten*. At least I remember it as beautiful ; and I am not going to spoil my recollection by reading it now. Here is the verse :—

Oh ! the sun in heaven fierce havoc viewed,  
When the Austrian turned to fly :  
And the brave, in the trampling multitude,  
Had a fearful death to die !

As I write that verse (at which the critical reader will smile), I am aware that Veal has its hold of me yet. I see nothing of the miserable scene the poet describes ; but I hear the waves murmuring on a distant beach, and I see the hills across the sea, the first sea I ever beheld ; I see the school to which I went daily ; I see

the class-room and the place where I used to sit ; I see the faces and hear the voices of my old companions, some dead, one sleeping in the middle of the great Atlantic, many scattered over distant parts of the world, almost all far away. Yes, I feel that I have not quite cast off the witchery of the *Battle of Morgarten*. Early associations can give to verse a charm and a hold upon one's heart which no literary excellence, however high, ever could. Look at the first hymns you learned to repent, and which you used to say at your mother's knee ; look at the psalms and hymns you remember hearing sung at church when you were a child : you know how impossible it is for you to estimate these upon their literary merits. They may be almost doggrel ; but not Mr. Tennyson can touch you like them ! The most effective eloquence is that which is mainly done by the mind to which it is addressed : it is *that* which touches chords which of themselves yield matchless music ; it is *that* which wakens up trains of old remembrance, and which wafts around you the fragrance of the hawthorn that blossomed and withered many long years since. An English stranger would not think much of the hymns we sing in our Scotch churches : he could not know what many of them are to us. There is a magic about the words. I can discern, indeed, that some of them are mawkish in sentiment, faulty in rhyme, and on the whole what you would call extremely unfitted to be sung in public worship, if you were judging of them as new things : but a crowd of associations which are beautiful and touching gathers round the lines which have no great beauty or pathos in themselves.

You were in an extremely vealy condition when, having attained the age of fourteen, you sent some verses to the

county newspaper, and with simple-hearted elation read them in the corner devoted to what was termed "Original Poetry." It is a pity you did not preserve the newspapers in which you first saw yourself in print, and experienced the peculiar sensation which accompanies that sight. No doubt your verses expressed the gloomiest views of life, and told of the bitter disappointments you had met in your long intercourse with mankind, and especially with womankind. And though you were in a flutter of anxiety and excitement to see whether or not your verses would be printed, your verses probably declared that you had used up life and seen through it; that your heart was no longer to be stirred by aught on earth; and that, in short, you cared nothing for anything. You could see nothing fine, then, in being good, cheerful, and happy; but you thought it a grand thing to be a gloomy man, of a very dark complexion, with blood on your conscience, upwards of six feet high, and accustomed to wander from land to land, like Childe Harold. You were extremely vealy when you used to fancy that you were sure to be a very great man; and to think how proud your relations would some day be of you, and how you would come back and excite a great commotion at the place where you used to be a schoolboy. And it is because the world has still left some impressionable spot in your hearts, my readers, that you still have so many fond associations with "the schoolboy spot, we ne'er forget, though we are there forgot." They were vealy days, though pleasant to remember, my old school companions, in which you used to go to the dancing-school (it was in a gloomy theatre, seldom entered by actors), in which you fell in love with several young ladies about eleven years old; and (being permitted occasionally to select

your own partners) made frantic rushes to obtain the hand of one of the beauties of that small society. Those were the days in which you thought that when you grew up it would be a very fine thing to be a pirate, bandit, or corsair, rather than a clergyman, barrister, or the like; even a cheerful outlaw like Robin Hood did not come up to your views; you would rather have been a man like Captain Kyd, stained with various crimes of extreme atrocity, which would entirely preclude the possibility of returning to respectable society, and given to moody laughter in solitary moments. Oh, what truly asinine developments the human being must go through before arriving at the stage of common sense! You were very vealy, too, when you used to think it a fine thing to astonish people by expressing awful sentiments, such as that you thought Mahommedans better than Christians, that you would like to be dissected after-death, that you did not care what you got for dinner, that you liked learning your lessons better than going out to play, that you would rather read Euclid than *Ivanhoe*, and the like. It may be remarked that this peculiar vealiness is not confined to youth; I have seen it appearing very strongly in men with gray hair. Another manifestation of vealiness, which appears both in age and youth, is the entertaining a strong belief that kings, noblemen, and baronets, are always in a condition of ecstatic happiness. I have known people pretty far advanced in life, who not only believed that monarchs must be perfectly happy, but that all who were permitted to continue in their presence would catch a considerable degree of the mysterious bliss which was their portion. I have heard a sane man, rather acute and clever in many things, seriously say, "If a man cannot be happy in

the presence of his Sovereign, where can he be happy?"

And yet, absurd and foolish as is moral vealiness, there is something fine about it. Many of the old and dear associations most cherished in human hearts, are of the nature of Veal. It is sad to think that most of the romance of life is unquestionably so. All spooniness, all the preposterous idolization of some one who is just like anybody else, all love (in the narrow sense in which the word is understood by novel readers), you feel when you look back, are Veal. The young lad and the young girl, whom at a pic-nic party you have discerned stealing off under frivolous pretexts from the main body of guests, and sitting on the grass by the riverside, enraptured in the prosecution of a conversation which is intellectually of the emptiest, and fancying that they two make all the world, and investing that spot with remembrances which will continue till they are gray, are (it must in sober sadness be admitted) of the nature of calves. For it is beyond doubt that they are at a stage which they will outgrow, and on which they may possibly look back with something of shame. All these things, beautiful as they are, are no more than Veal. Yet they are fitting and excellent in their time. No, let us not call them veal, they are rather like lamb, which is excellent though immature. No doubt, youth is immaturity; and as you outgrow it you are growing better and wiser; still youth is a fine thing, and most people would be young again if they could. How cheerful and light-hearted is immaturity! How cheerful and lively are the little children even of silent and gloomy men! It is sad, and it is unnatural, when they are not so. I remember yet, when I was at school, with what interest and wonder I used to look at two or

### CONCERNING VEAL.

three boys, about twelve or thirteen years old, who always dull, sullen, and unhappy-looking. In those as a general rule, you are never sorrowful without knowing the reason why. You are never conscious of a dull atmosphere, of the gloomy spirits, of after-time. Your youthful machine, bodily and mental, plays smoothly; your young being is cheery. Even a kitten is very different from a grave old cat; and a young colt, from a sobered by the cares and toils of years. And you attribute fine things to yourself in your youthful dream. You remember a beautiful dwelling I used often to see, from the brow of a great hill. I see the rich valley low, with magnificent woods and glades, and a river reflecting the sunset; and in the midst of the vast Saracenic pile, with gilded minarets blazing in the golden light. I have since then seen many splendid habitations, but none in the least equal to that. I do not even yet discard the idea that somewhere in the world there stands that noble palace, and that some day I shall find it out. You remember also the intense delight with which you read the books that charmed you when: how you carried off the poem or the tale to a solitary place, how you sat up far into the night to read it, how heartily you believed in all the story, and sympathized with the people it told of. I wish I could feel the veneration for the man who has written a book which I used once to feel. Oh that one could read the old volumes with the old feeling! Perhaps you have sometimes done them yet, and you remember the peculiar expression of the type in which they were printed: the pages look to you with the face of an old friend. If you were then an observant nature, you will understand how much the effect of any composition upon the human mind

pend upon the printing, upon the placing of the points, even upon the position of the sentences on the page. A grand, high-flown, and sentimental climax ought always to conclude at the bottom of a page. It will look ridiculous if it ends four or five lines down from the top of the next page. Somehow there is a feeling as of the difference between the night before and the next morning. It is as though the crushed ball-dress and the dishevelled locks of the close of the evening re-appeared, the same, before breakfast. Let us have homely sense at the top of the page, pathos at the foot of it. What a force in the bad type of the shabby little *Childs Harold* you used to read so often! You turn it over in a grand illustrated edition, and it seems like another poem. Let it here be said, that occasionally you look with something like indignation on the volume which enchained you in your boyish days. For now you have burst the chain. And you have somewhat of the feeling of the prisoner towards the jailer who held him in unjust bondage. What right had that bombastic rubbish to touch and thrill you as it used to do? Well, remember that it suits successive generations at their enthusiastic stage. There are poets whose great admirers are for the most part under twenty years old; but probably almost every clever young person regards them at some period in his life as among the noblest of mortals. And it is no ignoble ambition to win the ardent appreciation of even immature tastes and hearts. Its brief endurance is compensated by its intensity. You sit by the fireside and read your leisurely *Times*, and you feel a tranquil enjoyment. You like it better than the *Sorrows of Werter*, but you do not like it a twentieth part as much as you once liked the *Sorrows of Werter*. You would be interested in meeting the man

who wrote that brilliant and slashing leader; but you would not regard him with speechless awe, as something more than human. Yet, remembering all the weaknesses out of which men grow, and on which they look back with a smile or sigh, who does not feel that there is a charm which will not depart about early youth? Longfellow knew that he would reach the hearts of most men when he wrote such a verse as this :—

The green trees whispered low and mild;  
It was a sound of joy!  
They were my playmates when a child,  
And rocked me in their arms so wild;  
Still they looked at me and smiled,  
As if I were a boy!

Such readers as are young men, will understand what has already been said as to the bitter indignation with which the writer, some years ago, listened to self-conceited elderly persons who put aside the arguments and the doings of younger men with the remark that these younger men were *boys*. There are few terms of reproach which I have heard uttered with looks of such deadly ferocity. And there are not many which excite feelings of greater wrath in the souls of clever young men. I remember how in those days I determined to write an essay, which should scorch up and finally destroy all these carping and malicious critics. It was to be called *A Chapter on Boys*. After an introduction of a sarcastic and magnificent character, setting out views substantially the same as those contained in the speech of Lord Chatham in reply to Walpole, which boys are taught to recite at school, that essay was to go on to show that a great part of English literature was written by very young men. Unfortunately, on proceeding to investigate

the matter carefully, it appeared that the best part of English literature, even in the range of poetry, was in fact written by men of even more than middle age. So the essay was never finished, though a good deal of it was sketched out. Yesterday I took out the old manuscript; and after reading a bit of it, it appeared so remarkably vealy, that I put it with indignation into the fire. Still I observed various facts of interest as to great things done by young men, and some by young men who never lived to be old. Beaumont the dramatist died at twenty-nine. Christopher Marlowe wrote *Faustus* at twenty-five, and died at thirty. Sir Philip Sidney wrote his *Arcadia* at twenty-six. Otway wrote *The Orphan* at twenty-eight, and *Venice Preserved* at thirty. Thomson wrote the *Seasons* at twenty-seven. Bishop Berkeley had devised his Ideal System at twenty-nine; and Clarke at the same age published his great work on the *Being and Attributes of God*. Then there is Pitt, of course. But these cases are exceptional; and besides, men at twenty-eight and thirty are not in any way to be regarded as boys. What I wanted was proof of the great things that had been done by young fellows about two-and-twenty; and such proof was not to be found. A man is simply a boy grown up to his best; and of course what is done by men must be better than what is done by boys. Unless in very peculiar cases, a man at thirty will be every way superior to what he was at twenty; and at forty to what he was at thirty. Not indeed physically; let *that* be granted. Not always morally; but surely intellectually and æsthetically.

Yes, my readers, we have all been Calves. A great part of all our doings has been what the writer, in figu-

### CONCERNING VEAL.

native language, has described as Veal. We have said, written, or done very much on which we can now look back with entire approval. And we have said, written and done a very great deal on which we cannot look back but with burning shame and confusion. Very many things which, when we did them, we thought remarkably good, and much better than the doings of ordinary men, we now discern, on calmly looking back, to have been extremely bad. That time, you know, my friend, when you talked in a very fluent and animated manner after dinner at a certain house, and thought you were making a great impression on the assembled guests, most of them entire strangers; you are now fully aware that you were only making a fool of yourself. And let this hint of one public manifestation of vealiness, suffice to suggest to each of us scores of similar cases. But though we feel, in our secret souls, what calves we have been, and though it is well for us that we should feel it deeply, and thus learn humility and caution, we do not like to be reminded of it by anybody else. Some people have a wonderful memory for the vealy sayings and doings of their friends. They may be very bad hands at remembering anything else; but they never forget the silly speeches and actions on which one would like to shut down the leaf. You may find people, a great part of whose conversation consists of repeating and exaggerating their neighbor's Veal; and though that Veal may be immature enough and silly enough, it will go hard but your friend Mr. Snarling will represent it as a good deal worse than the fact. You will find men who while at college were students of large ambition but slender abilities, revenging themselves in this fashion upon the heavier men who beat them. It is easy, very easy, to

remember foolish things that were said and done even by the senior wrangler or the man who takes a double first-class; and candid folk will think that such foolish things were not fair samples of the men; and will remember, too, that the men have grown out of these, have grown mature and wise, and for many a year past would not have said or done such things. But if you were to judge from the conversation of Mr. Limejuice (who wrote many prize essays, but through the malice and stupidity of the judges never got any prizes), you would conclude that every word uttered by his successful rivals was one that stamped them as essential fools, and calves which would never grow into oxen. I do not think it is a pleasing or magnanimous feature in any man's character, that he is ever eager to rake up these early follies. I would not be ready to throw in the teeth of a pretty butterfly that it was an ugly caterpillar once, unless I understood that the butterfly liked to remember the fact. I would not suggest to this fair sheet of paper on which I am writing, that not long ago it was dusty rags and afterwards dirty pulp. You cannot be an ox without previously having been a calf; you acquire taste and sense gradually; and in acquiring them you pass through stages in which you have very little of either. It is a poor burden for the memory, to collect and shovel into it the silly sayings and doings in youth of people who have become great and eminent. I read with much disgust a biography of Mr. Disraeli, which recorded, no doubt accurately, all the sore points in that statesman's history. I remember, with great approval, what Lord John Manners said in Parliament in reply to Mr. Bright, who had quoted a well-known and very silly passage from Lord John's early poetry. "I would rather," said Lord John

"have been the man who in his youth wrote those silly verses, than the man who in mature years would rake them up." And with even greater indignation I regard the individual who, when a man is doing creditably and Christianly the work of life, is ever ready to relate and aggravate the moral delinquencies of his schoolboy and student days, long since repented of and corrected. "Remember not," said a man who knew human nature well, "the sins of my youth." But there are men whose nature has a peculiar affinity for anything petty, mean, and bad. They fly upon it as a vulture on carrion. Their memory is of that cast, that you have only to make inquiry of them concerning any of their friends, to hear of something not at all to the friends' advantage. There are individuals, after listening to whom you think it would be a refreshing novelty, almost startling from its strangeness, to hear them say a word in favor of any human being whatsoever.

It is not a thing peculiar to immaturity; yet it may be remarked, that though it is an unpleasant thing to look back and see that you have said or done something very foolish, it is a still more unpleasant thing to be well aware at the time that you are saying or doing something very foolish. If a man be a fool at all, it is much to be desired that he should be a very great fool, for then he will not know when he is making a fool of himself. But it is painful not to have sense enough to know what you should do in order to be right, but to have sense enough to know that you are doing wrong. To know that you are talking like an ass, yet to feel that you cannot help it; that you must say something, and can think of nothing better to say; this is a suffering that comes with advanced civilization. This is a phenomenon frequently to

be seen at public dinners in country towns, also at the entertainment which succeeds a wedding. Men at other times rational, seem to be stricken into idiocy when they rise to their feet on such occasions; and the painful fact is, that it is conscious idiocy. The man's words are asinine, and he knows they are asinine. His wits have entirely abandoned him: he is an idiot for the time. Have you sat next a man unused to speaking at a public dinner; have you seen him nervously rise and utter an incoherent, ungrammatical, and unintelligible sentence or two, and then sit down with a ghastly smile? Have you heard him say to his friend on the other side, in bitterness, "I have made a fool of myself!" And have you seen him sit moodily through the remainder of the feast, evidently ruminating on what he said, seeing now what he ought to have said, and trying to persuade himself that what he said was not so bad after all? Would you do a kindness to that miserable man? You have just heard his friend on the other side cordially agreeing with what he had said as to the badness of the appearance made by him. Enter into conversation with him; talk of his speech, congratulate him upon it; tell him you were extremely struck by the freshness and naturalness of what he said, that there is something delightful in hearing an unhackneyed speaker, that to speak with entire fluency looks professional — it is like a barrister or a clergyman. Thus you may lighten the mortification of a disappointed man; and what you say will receive considerable credence. It is wonderful how readily people believe anything they would like to be true.

I was walking this afternoon along a certain street, coming home from visiting certain sick persons, and won-

dering how I should conclude this essay, when, standing on the pavement on one side of the street, I saw a little boy of four years old, crying in great distress. Various individuals, who appeared to be Priests and Levites, looked as they passed at the child's distress, and passed on without doing anything to relieve it. I spoke to the little man, who was in great fear at being spoken to, but told me he had come away from his home and lost himself, and could not find his way back. I told him I would take him home if he could tell me where he lived: but he was frightened into utter helplessness, and could only tell that his name was Tom, and that he lived at the top of a stair. It was a poor neighborhood, in which many people live at the top of stairs, and the description was vague. I spoke to two humble, decent-looking women who were passing, thinking they might gain the little thing's confidence better than me; but the poor little man's great wish was just to get away from us, though when he got two yards off he could but stand and cry. You may be sure he was not left in his trouble, but that he was put safely in his father's hands. And as I was coming home, I thought that here was an illustration of something I have been thinking of all this afternoon. I thought I saw in the poor little child's desire to get away from those who wanted to help him, though not knowing where to go when left to himself, something analogous to what the immature human being is always disposed to. The whole teaching of our life is leading us away from our early delusions and follies, from all those things about us which have been spoken of under the similitude which need not be again repeated. Yet we push away the hand that would conduct us to soberer and better things, though when left alone we can but stand and

vaguely gaze about us; and we speak hardly of the growing experience which makes us wiser, and which ought to make us happier too. Let us not forget that the teaching which takes something of the gloss from life is an instrument in the kindest Hand of all; and let us be humbly content if that kindest Hand shall lead us, even by rough means, to calm and enduring wisdom — wisdom by no means inconsistent with youthful freshness of feeling, and not necessarily fatal even to youthful gaiety of mood; — and at last to that Happy Place, where worn men regain the little child's heart, and old and young are blest together!



### CHAPTER III.

#### CONCERNING THINGS SLOWLY LEARNT.

**Y**OU will see in a little while what sort of things they are which I understand by *Things Slowly Learnt*. Some are facts, some are moral truths, some are practical lessons ; but the great characteristic of all those which are to be thought of in this essay, is, that we have to learn them and act upon them in the face of a strong bias to think or act in an opposite way. It is not that they are so difficult in themselves ; not that they are hard to be understood, or that they are supported by arguments whose force is not apparent to every mind. On the contrary, the things which I have especially in view are very simple, and for the most part quite unquestionable. But the difficulty of learning them lies in this : that, as regards them, the head seems to say one thing and the heart another. We see plainly enough what we ought to think or to do ; but we feel an irresistible inclination to think or to do something else. It is about three or four of these things that we are going, my friend, to have a little quiet talk. We are going to confine our view to a single class, though possibly the most important class, in the innumerable multitude of Things Slowly Learnt.

The truth is, a great many things are slowly learnt.

I have lately had occasion to observe that the alphabet is one of these. I remember, too, in my own sorrowful experience, how the Multiplication Table was another. A good many years since, an eminent dancing-master undertook to teach a number of my schoolboy companions a graceful and easy deportment; but comparatively few of us can be said as yet to have thoroughly attained it. I know men who have been practising the art of extempore speaking for many years, but who have reached no perfection in it, and who, if one may judge from their confusion and hesitation when they attempt to speak, are not likely ever to reach even decent mediocrity in that wonderful accomplishment. Analogous statements might be made with truth, with regard to my friend Mr. Snarling's endeavors to produce magazine articles; likewise concerning his attempts to skate, and his efforts to ride on horseback unlike a tailor. Some folk learn with remarkable slowness that nature never intended them for wits. There have been men who have punned, ever more and more wretchedly, to the end of a long and highly respectable life. People submitted in silence to the infliction; no one liked to inform those reputable individuals that they had better cease to make fools of themselves. This, however, is part of a larger subject, which shall be treated hereafter. On the other hand, there are things which are very quickly learnt; which are learnt by a single lesson. One liberal tip, or even a few kind words heartily said, to a manly little schoolboy, will establish in his mind the rooted principle that the speaker of the words or the bestower of the tip is a jolly and noble specimen of humankind. Boys are great physiognomists: they read a man's nature at a glance. Well I remember how, when going to and from school, a



long journey of four hundred miles, in days when such a journey implied travel by sea as well as by land, I used to know instantly the gentlemen or the railway officials to whom I might apply for advice or information. I think that this intuitive perception of character is blunted in after years. A man is often mistaken in his first impression of man or woman; a boy hardly ever. And a boy not only knows at once whether a human being is amiable or the reverse; he knows also whether the human being is wise or foolish. In particular, he knows at once whether the human being always means what he says, or says a great deal more than he means. Inferior animals learn some lessons quickly. A dog once thrashed for some offence, knows quite well not to repeat it. A horse turns for the first time down the avenue to a house where he is well fed and cared for; next week, or next month, you pass that gate, and though the horse has been long taught to submit his will to yours, you can easily see that he knows the place again, and that he would like to go back to the stable with which, in his poor, dull, narrow mind, there are pleasant associations. I would give a good deal to know what a horse is thinking about. There is something very curious and very touching about the limited intelligence and the imperfect knowledge of that immaterial principle, in which the immaterial does not imply the immortal. And yet, if we are to rest the doctrine of a future life in any degree upon the necessity of compensation of the sufferings and injustice of a present, I think the sight of the cab horses of any large town might plead for the admission of some quiet world of green grass and shady trees, where there should be no cold, starvation, over-work, or flogging. Some one has said that the most

exquisite material scenery would look very cold and dead in the entire absence of irrational life. Trees suggest singing-birds; flowers and sunshine make us think of the drowsy bees. And it is curious to think how the future worlds of various creeds are described as not without their lowly population of animals inferior to man. We know what the "poor Indian" expects shall bear him company in his humble heaven; and possibly various readers may know some dogs who in certain important respects are very superior to certain men. You remember how, when a war-chief of the Western woods was laid by his tribe in his grave, his horse was led to the spot in the funeral procession, and at the instant when the earth was cast upon the dead warrior's dust, an arrow reached the noble creature's heart, that in the land of souls the man should find his old friend again. And though it has something of the grotesque, I think it has more of the pathetic, the aged huntsman of Mr. Assheton Smith desiring to be buried by his master, with two horses and a few couples of dogs, that they might all be ready to start together when they meet again far away.

This is a deviation; but *that* is of no consequence. It is of the essence of the present writer's essays to deviate from the track. Only we must not forget the thread of the discourse; and after our deviation we must go back to it. All this came of our remarking that some things are very quickly learnt; and that certain inferior classes of our fellow-creatures learn them quickly. But deeper and larger lessons are early learnt. Thoughtful children of a very few years old, have their own theory of human nature. Before studying the metaphysicians, and indeed while still imperfectly acquainted with their letters, young children have glimpses of the inherent selfishness of

humanity. I was recently present when a small boy of three years old, together with his sister, aged five, was brought down to the dining-room at the period of dessert. The small boy climbed upon his mother's knee, and began by various indications to display his affection for her. A stranger remarked what an affectionate child he was. "Oh," said the little girl, "he suspects (by which she meant *expects*) that he is going to get something to eat!" — Not Hobbes himself had reached a clearer perception or a firmer belief of the selfish system in moral philosophy. "He is always very affectionate," the youthful philosopher proceeded, "when he suspects he is going to get something good to eat!"

By *Things Slowly Learnt*, I mean not merely things which are in their nature such that it takes a long time to learn them; such as the Greek language, or the law of vendors and purchasers. These things indeed take long time and much trouble to learn; but once you have learnt them, you know them. Once you have come to understand the force of the second aorist, you do not find your heart whispering to you as you are lying awake at night, that what the grammar says about the second aorist is all nonsense; you do not feel an inveterate disposition, gaining force day by day, to think concerning the second aorist just the opposite of what the grammar says. By *Things Slowly Learnt*, I understand things which it is very hard to learn at the first, because strong as the reasons which support them are, you find it so hard to make up your mind to them. I understand things which you can quite easily (when it is fairly put to you) see to be true; but which it seems as if it would change the very world you live in to accept. I understand things you

discern to be true, but which you have all your life been accustomed to think false; and which you are extremely anxious to think false. And by *Things Slowly Learnt* I understand things which are not merely very hard to learn at the first; but which it is not enough to learn for once, ever so well. I understand things which, when you have made the bitter effort, and admitted them to be true and certain, you put into your mind to keep (so to speak); and hardly a day has passed when a soft quiet hand seems to begin to crumble them down and to wear them away to nothing. You write the principle which was so hard to receive, upon the tablet of your memory; and day by day a gentle hand comes over it with a bit of india-rubber, till the inscription loses its clear sharpness, grows blurred and indistinct, and finally quite disappears. Nor is the gentle hand content even then; but it begins, very faintly at first, to trace letters which bear a very different meaning. Then it deepens and darkens them day by day, week by week, till at a month's or a year's end the tablet of memory bears in great, sharp, legible letters, just the opposite thing to that which you had originally written down there. These are my *Things Slowly Learnt*. Things you learn at first in the face of a strong bias against them; things when once taught you gradually forget, till you come back again to your old way of thinking. Such things, of course, lie within the realm to which extends the influence of feeling and prejudice. They are things in the accepting of which both head and heart are concerned. Once convince a man that two and two make four, and he learns the truth without excitement, and he never doubts it again. But prove to a man that he is of much less importance than he has been accustomed to think; or prove to a woman that her

children are very much like those of other folk ; or prove to the inhabitant of a country parish that Britain has hundreds of parishes which in soil, and climate, and productions, are just as good as his own ; or prove to the great man of a little country town that there are scores of towns in this world where the walks are as pleasant, the streets as well paved, and the population as healthy and as well conducted ; and in each such case you will find it very hard to convince the individual at the time, and you will find that in a very short space the individual has succeeded in entirely escaping from the disagreeable conviction. You may possibly find, if you endeavor to instil such belief into minds of but moderate cultivation, that your arguments will be met less by force of reason than by roaring of voices and excitement of manner ; you may find that the person you address will endeavor to change the issue you are arguing, to other issues, wholly irrelevant, touching your own antecedents, character, or even personal appearance ; and you may afterwards be informed by good-natured friends, that the upshot of your discussion had been to leave on the mind of your acquaintance the firm conviction that you yourself are intellectually a blockhead, and morally a villain. And even when dealing with human beings who have reached that crowning result of a fine training, that they shall have got beyond thinking a man their "enemy because he tells them the truth," you may find that you have rendered a service like that rendered by the surgeon's amputating knife — salutary, yet very painful — and leaving forever a sad association with your thought and your name. For among the things we slowly learn, are truths and lessons which it goes terribly against the grain to learn at first

which must be driven into us time after time ; and which perhaps are never learnt completely.

One thing very slowly learnt by most human beings, is, that they are of no earthly consequence beyond a very small circle indeed ; and that really nobody is thinking or talking about them. Almost all commonplace men and women in this world have a vague but deeply-rooted belief that they are quite different from anybody else, and of course quite superior to everybody else. It may be in only one respect they fancy they are this, but that one respect is quite sufficient. I believe that if a grocer or silk-mercier in a little town has a hundred customers, each separate customer lives on under the impression that the grocer or the silk-mercier is prepared to give to him or her certain advantages in buying and selling which will not be accorded to the other ninety-nine customers. " Say it is for Mrs. Brown," is Mrs. Brown's direction to her servant when sending for some sugar ; " say it is for Mrs. Brown, and he will give it a little better." The grocer, keenly alive to the weaknesses of his fellow-creatures, encourages this notion. " This tea," he says, " would be four-and-sixpence a pound *to any one else*, but *to you* it is only four-and-threepence." Judging from my own observation, I should say that retail dealers trade a good deal upon this singular fact in the constitution of the human mind, that it is inexpressibly bitter to most people to believe that they stand on the ordinary level of humanity ; that, in the main, they are just like their neighbors. Mrs. Brown would be filled with unutterable wrath if it were represented to her that the grocer treats her precisely as he does Mrs. Smith, who lives on one side of her, and Mrs. Snooks, who lives on the other. She

would be still more angry if you asked her what earthly reason there is why she should in any way be distinguished beyond Mrs. Snooks and Mrs. Smith. She takes for granted she is quite different from them: quite superior to them. Human beings do not like to be classed, at least with the class to which in fact they belong. To be classed at all is painful to an average mortal, who firmly believes that there never was such a being in this world. I remember one of the cleverest friends I have — one who assuredly cannot be classed intellectually, except in a very small and elevated class — telling me how mortified he was, when a very clever boy of sixteen, at being classed at all. He had told a literary lady that he admired Tennyson. "Yes," said the lady, "I am not surprised at that: there is a class of young men who like Tennyson at your age." It went like a dart to my friend's heart. *Class of young men*, indeed! Was it for *this* that I outstripped all competitors at school, that I have been fancying myself an unique phenomenon in nature, *different* at least from every other being that lives, that I should be spoken of as one of *a class of young men*? Now, in my friend's half-playful reminiscence, I see the exemplification of a great fact in human nature. Most human beings fancy themselves, and all their belongings, to be quite different from all other beings, and the belongings of all other beings. I heard an old lady, whose son is a rifleman, and just like all the other volunteers of his corps, lately declare that on the occasion of a certain grand Review her Tom looked so entirely different from all the rest. No doubt he did to her, poor old lady, for he was her own. But the irritating thing was, that the old lady wished it to be admitted that Tom's superiority was an actual fact, equally

patent to the eyes of all mankind. Yes, my friend: it is a thing very slowly learnt by most men, that they are very much like other people. You see the principle which underlies what you hear so often said by human beings, young and old, when urging you to do something which it is against your general rule to do. "Oh, but you might do it *for me!*" Why for you more than for any one else, would be the answer of severe logic. But a kindly man would not take that ground: for doubtless the *Me*, however little to every one else, is to each unit in human-kind the centre of all the world.

Arising out of this mistaken notion of their own difference from all other men, is the fancy entertained by many, that they occupy a much greater space in the thoughts of others than they really do. Most folk think mainly about themselves and their own affairs. Even a matter which "everybody is talking about," is really talked about by each for a very small portion of the twenty-four hours. And a name which is "in everybody's mouth," is not in each separate mouth for more than a few minutes at a time. And during those few minutes, it is talked of with an interest very faint when compared with that you feel for yourself. You fancy it a terrible thing when you yourself have to do something which you would think nothing about if done by anybody else. A lady grows sick, and has to go out of church during the sermon. Well, you remark it; possibly indeed you don't; and you say, Mrs. Thomson went out of church to-day; she must be ill; and there the matter ends. But a day or two later you see Mrs. Thomson, and find her quite in a fever at the awful fact. It was a dreadful trial, walking out, and facing all the congregation: they must have thought it so strange; she

would not run the risk of it again for any inducement. The fact is just this : Mrs. Thompson thinks a great deal of the thing, because it happened to herself. It did not happen to the other people, and so they hardly think of it at all. But nine in every ten of them, in Mrs. Thomson's place, would have Mrs. Thomson's feeling ; for it is a thing which you, my reader, slowly learn, that people think very little about you.

Yes, it is a thing slowly learnt : by many not learnt at all. How many persons you meet walking along the street who evidently think that everybody is looking at them ! How few persons can walk through an exhibition of pictures at which are assembled the grand people of the town and all their own grand acquaintances, in a fashion thoroughly free from self-consciousness ! I mean without thinking of themselves at all, or of how they look ; but in an unaffected manner, observing the objects and beings around them. Men who have attained recently to a moderate eminence, are sometimes, if of small minds, much affected by this disagreeable frailty. Small literary men, and preachers with no great head or heart, have within my own observation suffered from it severely. I have witnessed a poet, whose writings I have never read, walking along a certain street. I call him a poet to avoid periphrasis. The whole get-up of the man, his dress, his hair, his hat, the style in which he walked, showed unmistakably that he fancied that everybody was looking at him, and that he was the admired of all admirers. In fact, nobody was looking at him at all. Some time since I beheld a portrait of a very, very small literary man. It was easy to discern from it that the small author lives in the belief that wherever he goes he is the object of universal observation. The intense self-con-

sciousness and self-conceit apparent in that portrait were, in the words of Mr. Squeers, "more easier conceived than described." The face was a very commonplace and rather good-looking one: the author, notwithstanding his most strenuous exertions, evidently could make nothing of the features to distinguish him from other men. But the length of his hair was very great; and oh, what genius he plainly fancied glowed in those eyes! I never in my life witnessed such an extraordinary glare. I do not believe that any human being ever lived whose eyes habitually wore that expression: only by a violent effort could the expression be produced; and then for a very short time, without serious injury to the optic nerves. The eyes were made as large as possible; and the thing after which the poor fellow had been struggling was that peculiar look which may be conceived to penetrate through the beholder, and pierce his inmost thoughts. I never beheld the living original, but if I saw him I should like in a kind way to pat him on the head, and tell him that *that* sort of expression would produce a great effect on the gallery of a minor theatre. The other day I was at a public meeting. A great crowd of people was assembled in a large hall: the platform at one end of it remained unoccupied till the moment when the business of the meeting was to begin. It was an interesting sight for any philosophic observer seated in the body of the hall to look at the men who by and by walked in procession on to the platform, and to observe the different ways in which they walked in. There were several very great and distinguished men: every one of these walked on to the platform and took his seat in the most simple and unaffected way, as if quite unconscious of the many eyes that were looking at them with interest and curiosity.

There were many highly respectable and sensible men, whom nobody cared particularly to see, and who took their places in a perfectly natural manner, as though well aware of the fact. But there were one or two small men, struggling for notoriety; and I declare it was pitiful to behold their entrance. I remarked one in particular, who evidently thought that the eyes of the whole meeting were fixed upon himself; and that as he walked in everybody was turning to his neighbor, and saying with agitation, "See, that's Snooks!" His whole gait and deportment testified that he felt that two or three thousand eyes were burning him up: you saw it in the way he walked to his place, in the way he sat down, in the way he then looked about him. If any one had tried to get up three cheers for Snooks, Snooks would not have known that he was being made a fool of. He would have accepted the incense of fame as justly his due. There once was a man who entered the Edinburgh theatre at the same instant with Sir Walter Scott. The audience cheered lustily; and while Sir Walter modestly took his seat, as though unaware that those cheers were to welcome the Great Magician, the other man advanced with dignity to the front of the box, and bowed in acknowledgment of the popular applause. This of course was but a little outburst of the great tide of vain self-estimation which the man had cherished within his breast for years. Let it be said here, that an affected unconsciousness of the presence of a multitude of people is as offensive an exhibition of self-consciousness as any that is possible. Entire-naturalness, and a just sense of a man's personal insignificance, will produce the right deportment. It is very irritating to see some clergymen walk into church to begin the service. They come in, with eyes

affectedly cast down, and go to their place without ever looking up, and rise and begin without one glance at the congregation. To stare about them as some clergymen do, in a free and easy manner, befits not the solemnity of the place and the worship; but the other is the worse thing. In a few cases it proceeds from modesty: in the majority from intolerable self-conceit. The man who keeps his eyes downcast in that affected manner fancies that everybody is looking at him. There is an insufferable self-consciousness about him; and he is much more keenly aware of the presence of other people than the man who does what is natural, and looks at the people to whom he is speaking. It is not natural nor rational to speak to one human being with your eyes fixed on the ground; and neither is it natural or rational to speak to a thousand. And I think that the preacher who feels in his heart that he is neither wiser nor better than his fellow-sinners to whom he is to preach, and that the advices he addresses to them are addressed quite as solemnly to himself, will assume no conceited airs of elevation above them, but will unconsciously wear the demeanor of any sincere worshipper, somewhat deepened in solemnity by the remembrance of his heavy personal responsibility in leading the congregation's worship; but assuredly and entirely free from the vulgar conceit which may be fostered in a vulgar mind by the reflection, "Now everybody is looking at me!" I have seen, I regret to say, various distinguished preachers whose pulpit demeanor was made to me inexpressibly offensive by this taint of self-consciousness. And I have seen some, with half the talent, who made upon me an impression a thousand-fold deeper than ever was made by the most brilliant eloquence; because the simple earnestness of

their manner said to every heart, "Now, I am not thinking in the least about myself, or about what you may think of me : my sole desire is to impress on your hearts these truths I speak, which I believe will concern us all forever!" I have heard great preachers, after hearing whom you could walk home quite at your ease, praising warmly the eloquence and the logic of the sermon. I have heard others (infinitely greater in my poor judgment), after hearing whom you would have felt it profanation to criticize the literary merits of their sermon, high as those were : but you walked home thinking of the lesson and not of the teacher ; solemnly revolving the truths you had heard ; and asking the best of all help to enable you to remember them and act upon them.

There are various ways in which self-consciousness disagreeably evinces its existence ; and there is not one perhaps more disagreeable than the affected avoidance of what is generally regarded as egotism. Depend upon it, my reader, that the straightforward and natural writer who frankly uses the first person singular, and says, "I think thus and thus," "I have seen so and so," is thinking of himself and his own personality a mighty deal less than the man who is always employing awkward and roundabout forms of expression to avoid the use of the obnoxious *I*. Every such periphrasis testifies unmistakably that the man was thinking of himself ; but the simple, natural writer, warm with his subject, eager to press his views upon his readers, uses the *I* without a thought of self, just because it is the shortest, most direct, and most natural way of expressing himself. The recollection of his own personality probably never once crossed his mind during the composition of the paragraph from which an ill-set critic might pick out a score of *I*'s. To

say "It is submitted" instead of "I think," "It has been observed" instead of "I have seen," "the present writer" instead of "I," is much the more really egotistical. Try to write an essay without using that vowel which some men think the very shibboleth of egotism, and the remembrance of yourself will be in the background of your mind all the time you are writing. It will be always intruding and pushing in its face, and you will be able to give only half your mind to your subject. But frankly and naturally use the "I," and the remembrance of yourself vanishes. You are grappling with the subject; you are thinking of it and of nothing else. You use the readiest and most unaffected mode of speech to set out your thoughts of it. You have written *I* a dozen times, but you have not thought of yourself once.

You may see the self-consciousness of some men strongly manifested in their handwriting. The handwriting of some men is essentially affected; more especially their signature. It seems to be a very searching test whether a man is a conceited person or an unaffected person, to be required to furnish his autograph to be printed underneath his published portrait. I have fancied I could form a theory of a man's whole character from reading, in such a situation, merely the words "Very faithfully yours, Eusebius Snooks." You could see that Mr. Snooks was acting when he wrote that signature. He was thinking of the impression it would produce on those who saw it. It was not the thing which a man would produce who simply wished to write his name legibly in as short a time and with as little needless trouble as possible. Let me say with sorrow that I have known even venerable bishops who were not superior to this irritating weakness. Some men aim at

an aristocratic hand ; some deal in vulgar flourishes. These are the men who have reached no farther than that stage at which they are proud of the dexterity with which they handle their pen. Some strive after an affectedly simple and student-like hand ; some at a dashing and military style. But there may be as much self-consciousness evinced by handwriting as by anything else. Any clergyman who performs a good many marriages will be impressed by the fact that very few among the humbler classes can sign their name in an unaffected way. I am not thinking of the poor bride who shakily traces her name, or of the simple bumpkin who slowly writes his, making no secret of the difficulty with which he does it. These are natural and pleasing. You would like to help and encourage them. But it is irritating when some forward fellow, after evincing his marked contempt for the slow and cramped performances of his friends, jauntily takes up the pen and dashes off his signature at a tremendous rate and with the air of an exploit, evidently expecting the admiration of his rustic friends, and laying a foundation for remarking to them on his way home that the parson could not touch him at penmanship. I have observed with a little malicious satisfaction that such persons, arising in their pride from the place where they wrote, generally smear their signature with their coat-sleeve, and reduce it to a state of comparative illegibility. I like to see the smirking, impudent creature a little taken down.

But it is endless to try to reckon up the fashions in which people show that they have not learnt the lesson of their own unimportance. Did you ever stop in the street and talk for a few minutes to some old bachelor ? If so, I dare say you have remarked a curious phenomē-

non. You have found that all of a sudden the mind of the old gentleman, usually reasonable enough, appeared stricken into a state approaching idiocy, and that the sentence which he had begun in a rational and intelligible way was ending in a maze of wandering words, signifying nothing in particular. You had been looking in another direction, but in sudden alarm you look straight at the old gentleman to see what on earth is the matter; and you discern that his eyes are fixed on some passer-by, possibly a young lady, perhaps no more than a magistrate or the like, who is by this time a good many yards off, with the eyes still following, and slowly revolving on their axis so as to follow without the head being turned round. It is this spectacle which has drawn off your friend's attention; and you notice his whole figure twisted into an ungainly form, intended to be dignified or easy, and assumed because he fancied that the passer-by was looking at him. Oh the pettiness of human nature! Then you will find people afraid that they have given offence by saying or doing things which the party they suppose offended had really never observed that they had said or done. There are people who fancy that in church everybody is looking at them, when in truth no mortal is taking the trouble to do so. It is an amusing though irritating sight to behold a weak-minded lady walking into church and taking her seat under this delusion. You remember the affected air, the downcast eyes, the demeanor intended to imply a modest shrinking from notice, but through which there shines the real desire, "Oh, for any sake, look at me!" There are people whose voice is utterly inaudible in church six feet off, who will tell you that a whole congregation of a thousand or fifteen hundred people was listening to their singing

Such folk will tell you that they went to a church where the singing was left too much to the choir, and began to sing as usual, on which the entire congregation looked round to see who it was that was singing, and ultimately proceeded to sing lustily too. I do not remember a more disgusting exhibition of vulgar self-conceit than I saw a few months ago at Westminster Abbey. It was a weekday afternoon service, and the congregation was small. Immediately before me there sat an insolent boor, who evidently did not belong to the Church of England. He had walked in when the prayers were half over, having with difficulty been made to take off his hat, and his manifest wish was to testify his contempt for the whole place and service. Accordingly he persisted in sitting, in a lounging attitude, when the people stood, and in standing up and staring about with an air of curiosity while they knelt. He was very anxious to convey that he was not listening to the prayers; but rather inconsistently he now and then uttered an audible grunt of disapproval. No one can enjoy the choral service more than I do, and the music that afternoon was very fine; but I could not enjoy it or join in it as I wished for the disgust I felt at the animal before me, and for my burning desire to see him turned out of the sacred place he was profaning. But the thing which chiefly struck me about the individual was not his vulgar and impudent profanity; it was his intolerable self-conceit. He plainly thought that every eye under the noble old roof was watching all his movements. I could see that he would go home and boast of what he had done, and tell his friends that all the clergy, choristers, and congregation had been awestricken by him, and that possibly word had by this time been conveyed to Lambeth or Fulham of the weakened

influence and approaching downfall of the Church of England. I knew that the very thing he wished was that some one should rebuke his conduct, otherwise I should certainly have told him either to behave with decency or to be gone.

I have sometimes witnessed a curious manifestation of this vain sense of self-importance. Did you ever, my reader, chance upon such a spectacle as this: a very commonplace man, and even a very great blockhead, standing in a drawing-room where a large party of people is assembled, with a grin of self-complacent superiority upon his unmeaning face? I am sure you understand the thing I mean. I mean a look which conveyed that, in virtue of some hidden store of genius or power, he could survey with a calm, cynical loftiness the little conversation and interests of ordinary mortals. You know the kind of interest with which a human being would survey the distant approaches to reason of an intelligent dog, or a colony of ants. I have seen this expression on the face of one or two of the greatest blockheads I ever knew. I have seen such a one wear it while clever men were carrying on a conversation in which he could not have joined to have saved his life. Yet you could see that (who can tell how?) the poor creature had somehow persuaded himself that he occupied a position from which he could look down upon his fellow-men in general. Or was it rather that the poor creature knew he was a fool, and fancied that thus he could disguise the fact? I dare say there was a mixture of both feelings.

You may see many indications of vain self-importance in the fact that various persons, old ladies for the most part, are so ready to give opinions which are not wanted, on matters of which they are not competent to judge.

Clever young curates suffer much annoyance from these people: they are always anxious to instruct the young curates how to preach. I remember well, ten years ago, when I was a curate (which in Scotland we call an *assistant*) myself, what advices I used to receive (quite unsought by me) from well-meaning but densely stupid old ladies. I did not think the advices worth much, even then; and now, by longer experience, I can discern that they were utterly idiotic. Yet they were given with entire confidence. No thought ever entered the head of these well-meaning but stupid individuals, that possibly they were not competent to give advice on such subjects. And it is vexatious to think that people so stupid may do serious harm to a young clergyman by head-shakings and sly innuendos as to his orthodoxy or his gravity of deportment. In the long run they will do no harm, but at the first start they may do a good deal of mischief. Not long since, such a person complained to me that a talented young preacher had taught unsound doctrine. She cited his words. I showed her that the words were taken *verbatim* from the *Confession of Faith*, which is our Scotch Thirty-nine Articles. I think it not unlikely that she would go on telling her tattling story just the same. I remember hearing a stupid old lady say, as though her opinion were quite decisive of the question, that no clergyman ought to have so much as a thousand a year; for if he had, he would be sure to neglect his duty. You remember what Dr. Johnson said to a woman who expressed some opinion or other upon a matter she did not understand. "Madam," said the moralist, "before expressing your opinion, you should consider what your opinion is worth." But this shaft would have glanced harmlessly from off the panoply of the stupid

and self-complacent old lady of whom I am thinking. It was a fundamental axiom with her that her opinion was entirely infallible. Some people would feel as though the very world were crumbling away under their feet, if they realized the fact that they could go wrong.

Let it here be said, that this vain belief of their own importance which most people cherish, is not at all a source of unmixed happiness. It will work either way. When my friend, Mr. Snarling, got his beautiful poem printed in the county newspaper, it no doubt pleased him to think, as he walked along the street, that every one was pointing him out as the eminent literary man who was the pride of the district; and that the whole town was ringing with that magnificent effusion. Mr. Tennyson, it is certain, felt that his crown was being reft away. But on the other hand, there is no commoner form of morbid misery than that of the poor nervous man or woman who fancies that he or she is the subject of universal unkindly remark. You will find people, still sane for practical purposes, who think that the whole neighborhood is conspiring against them, when in fact nobody is thinking of them.

All these pages have been spent in discussing a single thing slowly learnt: the remaining matters to be considered in this essay must be treated briefly.

Another thing slowly learnt is that we have no reason or right to be angry with people because they think poorly of us. This is a truth which most people find it very hard to accept, and at which, probably, very few arrive without pretty long thought and experience. Most people are angry when they are informed that some one has said that their ability is small, or that their proficiency in

any art is limited. Mrs. Malaprop was very indignant when she found that some of her friends had spoken lightly of her parts of speech. Mr. Snarling was wroth when he learned that Mr. Jollikin thought him no great preacher. Miss Brown was so on hearing that Mr. Smith did not admire her singing; and Mr. Smith on learning that Miss Brown did not admire his horsemanship. Some authors feel angry on reading an unfavorable review of their book. The present writer has been treated very, very kindly by the critics; far more so than he ever deserved; yet he remembers showing a notice of him which was intended to extinguish him for all coming time, to a un-hearted friend, who read it with gathering wrath, and vehemently starting up at its close, exclaimed (we knew who wrote the notice) "Now, I shall go straight and kick that fellow!" Now all this is very natural; but assuredly it is quite wrong. You understand, of course, that I am thinking of unfavorable opinions of you, honestly held, and expressed without malice. I do not mean to say that you would choose for your special friend or companion one who thought meanly of your ability or your sense; it would not be pleasant to have him always by you; and the very fact of his presence would tend to keep you from doing justice to yourself. For it is true, that when with people who think you very clever and wise, you really are a good deal cleverer and wiser than usual; while with people who think you stupid and silly, you find yourself under a malign influence which tends to make you actually so for the time. If you want a man to gain any good quality, the way is to give him credit for possessing it. If he has but little, give him credit for all he has, at least; and you will find him daily get more. You know how Arnold made boys

truthful; it was by giving them credit for truth. Of that we all fitly understood that the same grand principle should be extended to all good qualities, intellectual and moral! Dingently instil into a boy that he is a stupid, idle, bad-hearted blockhead, and you are very likely to make him all *that*. And so you can see that it is not judicious to choose for a special friend and associate one who thinks poorly of one's sense or one's parts. Indeed, if such a one honestly thinks poorly of you, and has any moral earnestness, you could not choose him for a special friend if you wished it. Let us choose for our companions (if such can be found) those who think well and kindly of us, even though we may know within ourselves that they think too kindly and too well. For that favorable estimation will bring out and foster all that is good in us. There is between this and unfavorable judgment all the difference between warm, genial sunshine, that draws forth the flowers and encourages them to open their leaves, and the nipping frost or the blighting east-wind that represses and deheartens all vegetable life. But though thus you would not choose for your special companion one who thinks poorly of you, and though you might not even wish to see him very often, you have no reason to have an angry feeling towards him. He cannot help his opinion. His opinion is determined by his lights. His opinion, possibly, founds on those æsthetic considerations as to which people will never think alike, with which there is no reasoning, and for which there is no accounting. God has made him so that he dislikes your book, or at least cannot heartily appreciate it; and that is not his fault. And, holding his opinion, he is quite entitled to express it. It may not be polite to express it to yourself. By

#### THINGS SLOWLY LEARNT.

common consent it is understood that you are never, except in cases of absolute necessity, to say to any man that which is disagreeable to him. And if you go, and, without any call to do so, express to a man himself that you think poorly of him, he may justly complain, not of your unfavorable opinion of him, but of the malice which is implied in your needlessly informing him of it. But if any one expresses such an unfavorable opinion of you in your absence, and some one comes and repeats it to you, be angry with the person who repeats the opinion to you, not with the person who expressed it. For what you do not know will cause you no pain. And all sensible folk, aware how estimates of any mortal must differ, will, in the long run, attach nearly the just weight to any opinion, favorable or unfavorable.

Yes, my friend, utterly put down the natural tendency in your heart to be angry with the man who thinks poorly of you. For you have, in sober reason, no right to be angry with him. It is more pleasant, and indeed more profitable, to live among those who think highly of you. It makes you better. You actually grow into what you get credit for. Oh how much better a clergyman preaches to his own congregation, who listen with kindly and sympathetic attention to all he says, and always think too well of him, than to a set of critical strangers, eager to find faults and to pick holes! And how heartily and pleasantly the essayist covers his pages, which are to go into a magazine whose readers have come to know him well, and to bear with all his ways! If every one thought him a dull and stupid person, he could not write at all. Indeed, he would bow to the general belief, and accept the truth that he is dull and stupid. But further, my reader, let us be reasonable when it is pleasant; and let us some-

times be irrational when *that* is pleasant too. It is natural to have a very kindly feeling to those who think well of us. Now, though, in severe truth, we have no more reason for wishing to shake hands with the man who thinks well of us, than for wishing to shake the man who thinks ill of us; yet let us yield heartily to the former pleasant impulse. It is not reasonable, but it is all right. You cannot help liking people who estimate you favorably, and say a good word of you. No doubt we might slowly learn not to like them more than anybody else; but we need not take the trouble to learn *that* lesson. Let us all, my readers, be glad if we can reach that cheerful position of mind at which various authors have arrived, that we shall be extremely gratified when we find ourselves favorably reviewed, and not in the least angry when we find ourselves reviewed unfavorably; that we shall have a very kindly feeling towards such as think well of us, and no unkind feeling whatever to those who think ill of us. Thus, whenever we have written an article in a magazine, at the beginning of the month shall we look with equal minds at the newspaper notices of it; we shall be soothed and exhilarated when we find ourselves described as sages, and we shall be amused and interested when we find ourselves shown up as little better than geese.

Of course, it makes a difference in the feeling with which you ought to regard any unfavorable opinion of you, whether spoken or written, if the unfavorable opinion which is expressed be plainly not honestly held, and be maliciously expressed. You may occasionally hear a judgment expressed of a young girl's music or dancing, of a gentleman's horses, of a preacher's sermons, of an author's books, which is manifestly dictated by personal

spite and jealousy, and which is expressed with the intention of doing mischief and giving pain to the person of whom the judgment is expressed. You will occasionally find such judgments supported by wilful misrepresentation, and even by pure invention. In such a case as this, the essential thing is not the unfavorable opinion ; it is the malice which leads to its entertainment and expression. And the conduct of the offending party should be regarded with that feeling which, on calm thought, you discern to be the right feeling with which to regard malice, accompanied by falsehood. Then is it well to be angry here? I think not. You may see that it is not safe to have any communication with a person who will abuse and misrepresent you ; it is not safe, and it is not pleasant. But don't be angry. It is not worth while. That old lady, indeed, told all her friends that you said, in your book, something she knew quite well you did not say. Mr. Snarling did the like. But the offences of such people are not worth powder and shot ; and besides this, my friend, if you saw the case from their point of view, you might see that they have something to say for themselves. You failed to call for the old lady so often as she wished you should. You did not ask Mr. Snarling to dinner. These are bad reasons for pitching into you ; but still they are reasons ; and Mr. Snarling and the old lady, by long brooding over them, may have come to think that they are very just and weighty reasons. And did you never, my friend, speak rather unkindly of these two persons? Did you never give a ludicrous account of their goings-on, or even an ill-set account, which some kind friend was sure to repeat to them? Ah, my reader ; don't be too hard on Snarling ; possibly you have yourself done something very like what he is doing now.

Forgive, as you need to be forgiven! And try to attain that quite attainable temper, in which you will read or listen to the most malignant attack upon you, with curiosity and amusement, and with no angry feeling at all. I suppose great people attain to this. I mean cabinet ministers and the like, who are daily flayed in print somewhere or other. They come to take it all quite easily. And if they were pure angels, somebody would attack them. Most people, even those who differ from him, know that if this world has a humble, conscientious, pious man in it, that man is the present Archbishop of Canterbury. Yet last night I read in a certain powerful journal, that the great characteristics of that good man, are cowardice, trickery, and simple rascality! Honest Mr. Bumpkin, kind-hearted Miss Goodbody, do you fancy that *you* can escape?

Then we ought to try to fix it in our mind, that in all matters into which taste enters at all, the most honest and the most able men may hopelessly, diametrically, differ. Original idiosyncrasy has so much to say here; and training has also so much. One cultivated and honest man has an enthusiastic and most real love and enjoyment of Gothic architecture, and an absolute hatred for that of the classic revival; another man equally cultivated and honest, has tastes which are the logical contradictory of these. No one can doubt the ability of Byron, or of Sheridan; yet each of them thought very little of Shakspeare. The question is, *what suits you?* You may have the strongest conviction that you ought to like an author; you may be ashamed to confess that you don't like him; and yet you may feel that you detest him. For my self, I confess with shame, and I know the reason is in myself, I cannot for my life see anything to admire in the

writings of Mr. Carlyle. His style, both of thought and language, is to me insufferably irritating. I tried to read the *Sartor Resartus*, and could not do it. So if all people who have learned to read English were like me, Mr. Carlyle would have no readers. Happily the majority, in most cases, possesses the normal taste. At least there is no further appeal than to the deliberate judgment of the majority of educated men. I confess, further, that I would rather read Mr. Helps than Milton : I do not say that I think Mr. Helps the greater man, but that I feel he suits me better. I value the *Autocrat of the Breakfast-table* more highly than all the writings of Shelley put together. It is a curious thing to read various reviews of the same book ; particularly if it be one of those books which, if you like at all, you will like very much, and which if you don't like you will absolutely hate. It is curious to find opinions flatly contradictory of one another set forth in those reviews by very able, cultivated, and unprejudiced men. There is no newspaper published in Britain which contains abler writing than the *Edinburgh Scotsman*. And of course no one need say anything as to the literary merits of the *Times*. Well, one day within the last few months, the *Times* and the *Scotsman* each published a somewhat elaborate review of a certain book. The reviews were flatly opposed to one another ; they had no common ground at all ; one said the book was extremely good, and the other that it was extremely bad. You must just make up your mind that in matters of taste there can be no unvarying standard of truth. In æsthetic matters, truth is quite relative. What is bad to you, is good to me perhaps.

If you, my reader, are a wise and kind-hearted person (as I have no doubt whatever but you are), I think you

would like very much to meet and converse with any person who has formed a bad opinion of you. You would take great pleasure in overcoming such a one's prejudice against you ; and if the person were an honest and worthy person, you would be almost certain to do so. Very few folk are able to retain any bitter feeling towards a man they have actually talked with, unless the bitter feeling be one which is just. And a very great proportion of all the unfavorable opinions which men entertain of their fellow-men found on some misconception. You take up somehow an impression that such a one is a conceited, stuck-up person : you come to know him, and you find he is the frankest and most unaffected of men. You had a belief that such another was a cynical, heartless being, till you met him one day coming down a long black stair in a poor part of the town from a bare chamber in which is a little sick child, with two large tears running down his face ; and when you enter the poor apartment you learn certain facts as to his quiet benevolence which compel you suddenly to construct a new theory of that man's character. It is only people who are radically and essentially bad whom you can really dislike after you come to know them. And the human beings who are thus essentially bad are very few. Something of the original Image lingers yet in almost every human soul. And in many a homely, commonplace person, what with vestiges of the old, and a blessed planting-in of something new, there is a vast deal of it. And every human being, conscious of honest intention and of a kind heart, may well wish that the man who dislikes and abuses him could just know him.

But there are human beings whom, if you are wise, you would not wish to know you too well. I mean the human beings ( if such there should be ) who think very

Highly of you ; who imagine you very clever and very amiable. Keep out of the way of such ! Let them see as little of you as possible. For when they come to know you well, they are quite sure to be disenchanted. The enthusiastic ideal which young people form of any one they admire is smashed by the rude presence of facts. I have got somewhat beyond the stage of feeling enthusiastic admiration, yet there are two or three living men whom I should be sorry to see. I know I should never admire them so much any more. I never saw Mr. Dickens : I don't want to see him. Let us leave Yarrow unvisited : our sweet ideal is fairer than the fairest fact. No hero is a hero to his valet : and it may be questioned whether any clergyman is a saint to his beadle.. Yet the hero may be a true hero, and the clergyman a very excellent man : but no human being can bear too close inspection. I remember hearing a clever and enthusiastic young lady complain of what she had suffered on meeting a certain great bishop at dinner. No doubt he was dignified, pleasant, clever ; but the mysterious halo was no longer round his head. Here is a sad circumstance in the lot of a very eminent man : I mean such a man as Mr. Tennyson or Professor Longfellow. As an elephant walks through a field, crushing the crop at every step, so do these men advance through life, smashing, every time they dine out, the enthusiastic fancies of several romantic young people.

This was to have been a short essay. But you see it is already long ; and I have treated only two of the four Things Slowly Learnt which I had noted down. The other two must be very briefly stated.

The first of the two things is a practical lesson. It is

this : to allow for human folly, laziness, carelessness, and the like, just as you allow for the properties of matter, such as weight, friction, and the like, without being surprised or angry at them. You know that if a man is lifting a piece of lead he does not think of getting into a rage because it is heavy ; or if a man is dragging a tree along the ground he does not get into a rage because it plows deeply into the earth as it comes. He is not surprised at these things. They are nothing new. It is just what he counted on. But you will find that the same man, if his servants are lazy, careless, and forgetful ; or if his friends are petted, wrong-headed, and impracticable ; will not only get quite angry, but will get freshly angry at each new action which proves that his friends or servants possess these characteristics. Would it not be better to make up your mind that such things are characteristic of humanity, and so that you must look for them in dealing with human beings ? And would it not be better, too, to regard each new proof of laziness, not as a new thing to be angry with, but merely as a piece of the one great fact that your servant is lazy, with which you get angry once for all, and have done with it ? If your servant makes twenty blunders a day, do not regard them as twenty separate facts at which to get angry twenty several times. Regard them just as twenty proofs of the one fact, that your servant is a blunderer ; and be angry just once, and no more. Or if some one you know gives twenty indications in a day that he or she (let us say she) is of a petted temper, regard these merely as twenty proofs of one lamentable fact, and not as twenty different facts to be separately lamented. You accept the fact that the person is petted and ill-tempered : you regret it and blame it once for all. And after this once

you take as of course all new manifestations of pettedness and ill-temper. And you are no more surprised at them, or angry with them, than you are at lead for being heavy, or at down for being light. It is their nature, and you calculate on it, and allow for it.

Then the second of the two remaining things is this — that you have no right to complain if you are postponed to greater people, or if you are treated with less consideration than you would be if you were a greater person. Uneducated people are very slow to learn this most obvious lesson. I remember hearing of a proud old lady, who was proprietor of a small landed estate in Scotland. She had many relations, some greater, some less. The greater she much affected, the less she wholly ignored. But they did not ignore *her*; and one morning an individual arrived at her mansion-house, bearing a large box on his back. He was a travelling peddler; and he sent up word to the old lady that he was her cousin, and hoped she would buy something from him. The old lady indignantly refused to see him, and sent orders that he should forthwith quit the house. The peddler went; but on reaching the court-yard, he turned to the inhospitable dwelling, and in a loud voice exclaimed, in the ears of every mortal in the house, "Ay, if I had come in my carriage-and-four, ye wad have been proud to have ta'en me in!" The peddler fancied that he was hurling at his relative a scathing sarcasm: he did not see that he was simply stating a perfectly unquestionable fact. No doubt earthly, if he had come in a carriage-and-four, he would have got a hearty welcome, and he would have found his claim of kindred eagerly allowed. But he thought he was saying a bitter and cutting thing, and (strange to

say) the old lady, fancied she was listening to a bitter and cutting thing. He was merely expressing a certain and innocuous truth. But though all mortals know that in this world big people meet greater respect than small (and quite right too), most mortals seem to find the principle a very unpleasant one when it comes home to themselves. And we learn but slowly to acquiesce in seeing ourselves plainly subordinated to other people. Poor Oliver Goldsmith was very angry when at the club one night he was stopped in the middle of a story by a Dutchman, who had noticed that the Great Bear was rolling about in preparation for speaking, and who exclaimed to Goldsmith, "Stop, stop; Doctor Shonson is going to speak!" Once I arrived at a certain railway station. Two old ladies were waiting to go by the same train. I knew them well, and they expressed their delight that we were going the same way. "Let us go in the same carriage," said the younger, in earnest tones; "and will you be so very kind as to see about our luggage?" After a few minutes of the lively talk of the period and district, the train came up. I feel the tremor of the platform yet. I handed my friends into a carriage, and then saw their baggage placed in the van. It was a station at which trains stop for a few minutes for refreshments. So I went to the door of the carriage into which I had put them, and waited a little before taking my seat. I expected that my friends would proceed with the conversation which had been interrupted; but to my astonishment I found that I had become wholly invisible to them. They did not see me or speak to me at all. In the carriage with them was a living peer, of wide estates and great rank, whom they knew. And so thoroughly did he engross their eyes and thoughts and

words, that they had become unaware of my presence, or even my existence. The stronger sensation rendered them unconscious of the weaker. Do you think I felt angry? No, I did not. I felt very much amused. I recognized a slight manifestation of a grand principle. It was a straw showing how a current sets, but for which Britain would not be the country it is. I took my seat in another carriage, and placidly read my *Times*. There was one lady in that carriage. I think she inferred, from the smiles which occasionally for the first few miles overspread my countenance without apparent cause, that my mind was slightly disordered.

These are the two things already mentioned. But you cannot understand, friendly reader, what an effort it has cost me to treat them so briefly. The experienced critic will discern at a glance that the author could easily have made a great many pages out of the material you have here in very few. The author takes his stand upon this—that there are few people who can beat out thought so thin, or say so little in such a great number of words. I remember how a dear friend, once the editor of a certain well-known magazine (whom all who knew him well miss more and more as days and weeks go on, and never will cease to miss), used to remark this fact in various warm-hearted and playful letters, with wonder not un-mixed with indignation. And I remember how a very great prelate (who could compress all I have said into a page and a half) once comforted me by telling me that for the consumption of many minds it was desirable that thought should be very greatly diluted; that quantity as well as quality is needful in the dietetics both of the body and the mind. With this soothing reflection I close the present essay.

*Annotations on the foregoing Chapter.*

BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

(1.) The Indian Brahmin who purchased, for a great price, an elaborate microscope which had shown him that he swallowed multitudes of minute animalculæ in every draught of water, dashed it to pieces, saying it should never inflict that misery upon others it had upon him.

(2.) E. S. (now Lord St. L.), is the son of a hairdresser, said to have been very eminent in his own way. A gentleman asked the man who was cutting his hair whether he remembered anything of him. "Oh, yes; I remember him very well when I was an apprentice. Wonderful man! Had half-a-guinea for cutting hair! Nobody like him since!" "Well," said the other, "his *son* is a very eminent man too in *his* way." "Oh, is he, sir?" "Yes; the first lawyer in England." "Oh, is he, sir — *I never heard of him.*"

(3.) A gentleman who was fond of attending at the Lord Mayor of London's, to hear the trials and petitions and memorials that were going on, heard a memorial sent in by some Chimney-Sweepers, who complained of an interference which encroached on their annual May-Day festival, on which they dress themselves up and go round to receive contributions from their customers. They complained that their place had been usurped by certain *Dustmen* and other *low fellows pretending to be Chimney-Sweepers!*



## CHAPTER IV.

### GONE.

**E**DGAR ALLAN POE thought the most touching of all words, *Nevermore* ; which, in American fashion, he made one word. American writers do the like with *Forever*, I think with bad effect. Ellesmere, in that most beautiful story of *Gretchen*, tells of a sermon he heard in Germany, in which "that pathetic word *verloren* (lost) occurred many times." Every one knows what Dr. Johnson wrote about *The Last*. It is, of course, a question of individual associations, and how it may strike different minds ; but I stand up for the unrivalled reach and pathos of the short word *GONE*.

There is not very much difference, you see, between the three words. All are on the suburbs of the same idea. All convey the idea of a state of matters which existed for a time, and which is now over. All suggest that the inmost longing of most human hearts is less for a future, untried happiness than for a return, a resurrection, beautified and unalloyed with care, of what has already been. Somehow, we are ready to feel as if we were safest and surest with *that*.

It is curious, that the saddest and most touching of human thoughts, when we run it up to its simplest form, is of so homely a thing as a material object existing in a

certain space, and then removing from that space to another. *That* is the essential idea of *Gone*.

Yet, in the commonest way, there is something touching in that: something touching in the sight of vacant space, once filled by almost anything. You feel a blankness in the landscape when a tree is gone that you have known all your life. You are conscious of a vague sense of something lacking when even a post is pulled up that you remember always in the centre of a certain field. You feel this yet more when some familiar piece of furniture is taken away from a room which you know well. Here that clumsy easy-chair used to stand: and it is gone. You feel yourself an interloper, standing in the space where it stood so long. It touches you still more to look at the empty chair which you remember so often filled by one who will never fill it more. You stand in a large railway station: you have come to see a train depart. There is a great bustle on the platform, and there is a great quantity of human life, and of the interests and cares of human life, in those twelve or fourteen carriages, and filling that little space between the rails. You stand by and watch the warm interiors of the carriages, looking so large, and so full, and as if they had so much in them. There are people of every kind of aspect, children and old folk, multitudes of railway rugs, of carpet-bags, of portmanteaus, of parcels, of newspapers, of books, of magazines. At length you hear the last bell; then comes that silent, steady pull, which is always striking, though seen ever so often. The train glides away: it is gone. You stand, and look vacantly at the place where it was. How little the space looks; how blank the air! There are the two rails, just four feet eight and a half inches apart: how close together they look! You can hardly think that

there was so much of life, and of the interests of life, in so little room. You feel the power upon the average human being of the simple, commonplace fact, that something has been here, and is gone.

Then I go away in thought, to a certain pier: a pair of wooden piles, running two hundred yards into the sea, at a quiet spot on a lovely coast, where various steam-vessels call on a summer day. You stand at the seaward end of the pier, where it broadens into a considerable platform: and you look down on the deck of a steamer lying alongside. What a bustle: what a hive of human beings, and their children, and their baggage, their hopes, fears, and schemes, fills that space upon the water of a hundred and fifty feet long and twenty-five wide! And what a deafening noise, too, of escaping steam fills the air! Men with baggage dash up against you; women shrilly vociferate above the roar of the steam; it is a fragment of the vitality and hurry of the great city carried for a little to the quiet country-place. But the last rope is thrown off; the paddles turn; the steamer moves — it is gone. There is the blank water, churned now into foam, but in a few minutes transparent green, showing the wooden piles, encrusted with shells, and with weeds that wave about below the surface. There you stand, and look vaguely, and think vaguely. It is a curious feeling. It is a feeling you do not understand except by experience. And to a thoughtful person a thing does not become commonplace because it is repeated hundreds of thousands of times. There is something strange and something touching about even a steamboat going away from a pier at which a dozen call every day.

But you sit upon the pier, you saunter upon the beach,

you read the newspapers; you enjoy the sense of rest. The day wears away, and in the evening the steamboat comes back again. It has travelled scores of miles, and carried many persons through many scenes, while you were resting and idling through these hours; and the feeling you had when it was gone is effaced by its return. The going away is neutralized by the coming back. And to understand the full force of *Gone* in such a case, you must see a ship go, and see its vacant space when it is gone, when it goes away for a long time, and takes some with it who go forever. Perhaps you know by experience what a choking sensation there is in looking at an emigrant vessel clearing out, even though you have no personal interest in any one on board. I have seen such a ship depart on her long voyage. I remember the confusion and hurry that attended her departure: the crowded deck, thronged with old and young; gray-headed men bidding farewell to their native land; and little children who would carry but dim remembrances of Britain to the distant Australian shore. And who that has witnessed such a scene can forget how, when the canvas was spread at length, and the last rope cast off, the outburst of sobs and weeping arose as the great ship solemnly passed away? You could see that many who parted there, had not understood what parting means till they were in the act of going. You could see that the old parents who were willing, they thought, to part from their boy, because they thought his chances in life were so much better in the new country, had not quite felt what parting from him was, till he was gone.

Have you ever been one of a large gay party who have made an excursion to some beautiful scene, and had a picnic festival? Not that such festivals are much

to be approved ; at least to spots of very noble scenery. The noble scenery is vulgarized by them. There is an inconsistency in seeking out a spot which ought to awe-strike, merely to make it a theatre for eating and drinking, for stupid joking and laughter. No ; let small-talk be manufactured somewhere else. And the influence of the lonely place is lost, its spirit is unfelt, unless you go alone, or go with very few, and these not boisterously merry. But let us accept the picnic as a fact. It has been, and the party has been very large and very lively. But go back to the place after the party is gone ; go back a minute after for something forgotten ; go back a month or a year after. What a little spot it is that you occupied, and how blank it looks ! The place remains, but the people are gone ; and we so lean to our kind, that the place alone occupies but a very little part in our recollection of any passage in our history in which there were both scenery and human life. Or go back after several years to the house where you and your brothers and sisters were children together, and you will wonder to find how small and how blank it will look. It will touch you, and perhaps deeply ; but still you will discern that not places, but persons, are the true objects of human affection ; and you will think what a small space of material ground may be the scene of what are to you great human events and interests. It is so with matters on a grander scale. How little a space was ancient Greece — how little a space the Holy Land ! Strip these of their history and their associations, and they are insignificant. And history and associations are invisible ; and at the first glimpse of the place without them the place looks poor. Let the little child die that was the light and hope of a great dwelling, and you will understand the truth of

the poet's reflection on the loss of his: "'T was strange that such a little thing, Should leave a blank so large!"

There is no place perhaps where you have such a feeling of blankness when life has gone from it as in a church. It is less so, if the church be a very grand one, which compels you to attend to itself a good deal, even while the congregation is assembled. But if the church be a simple one, and the congregation a very large one, crowding the simple church, you hardly know it again when the congregation is gone. You could not believe that such a vast number of human beings could have been gathered in it. The place is unchanged, yet it is quite different. It is a curious feeling to look at the empty pulpit where a very great preacher once was accustomed to preach. It is especially so if it be thirty years since he used to preach there; more so, if it be many centuries. I have often looked at the pulpit whence Chalmers preached in the zenith of his fame; you can no more bring up again the excited throng that surrounded it, and the rush of the great orator's eloquence, than when standing under a great oak in December you can call up plainly what it looked in June. And far less, standing under the dome of St. Sophia, could one recall as a present reality, or as anything but a dreamy fancy, the aspect and the eloquence of Constantine, ages since gone.

The feeling of *blankness*, which is the essential contained in the idea suggested by the word *Gone*, is one that touches us very nearly. It seems to get to us more than even positive evil or suffering present to us. *That* fixes our attention: it arouses us; and, we be very weak indeed, awakens something of *ance*. But in the other case, the mind is not stim-

It is receptive, not active; and we muse and feel, vacantly, in the thought of something gone. You are, let us suppose, a country parson; you take your wife and children over to your railway-station, and you see them away to the seaside, whither you are not to follow for a fortnight: then you come back from the railway-station, and you reach home. The house is quite changed. How startlingly quiet it is! You go to the nursery, usually a noisy place: you feel the silence. There are the pictures on the walls: there the little chairs: there some flowers, still quite fresh, lying upon a table, laid down by little hands. Gone! There is something sad in it, even with the certainty of soon meeting again,—that is, so far as there is certainty in this world. You can imagine, distantly, what it would be if the little things were gone, not to return. *That* is the GONE consummate. All who have heard it know the unutterable sadness of the farewell of the Highland emigrant leaving his native hills. You would not laugh at the bagpipes, if you heard their wild wailing tones, blending with broken voices joining in that *Macrimmon's Lament*, whose perpetual refrain is just the statement of that consummate Gone. I shall not write the Gaelic words, because you could not pronounce them; but the refrain is this: *We return, we return, we return no more!* Yes; Gone for ever! And all to make room for deer! There was a man whose little boy died. The father bore up wonderfully. But on the funeral day, after the little child was laid down to his long rest, the father went out to walk in the garden. There, in a corner, was the small wheelbarrow with its wooden spade; and the foot-prints in the earth left by the little feet that were gone! You do not think the less of the strong man that at the sight

he wept aloud : wept, as Some One Else had wept before him. You may remember that little poem of Longfellow's, in which he tells of a man, still young, who once had a wife and child : but wife and child were dead. There is no pathos like that of homely fact, which we may witness every day. They were gone ; and after those years in their company, he was left alone. He walked about the world, with no one to care for him now, as they had cared. The life with them would seem like a dream, even if it had lasted for years. And all the sadder that so much of life might yet have to come. I do not mind about an old bachelor, in his solitary room. I think of the kind-hearted man, sitting in the evening in his chair by the fireside : once, when he sat down there, little pattering feet were about him and their little owners climbed upon his knee. Now, he may sit long enough, and no one will interrupt him. He may read his newspaper undisturbed. He may write his sermon, and no sly knock come to the door : no little dog walk in, with much barking quite unlike that of common dogs, and ask for a penny. Gone ! I remember, long ago, reading a poem called the *Scottish Widow's Lament*, written by some nameless poet. The widow had a husband and two little children, but one bleak winter they all went together : —

I ettle whiles to spin,  
But wee, wee patterin' feet,  
Come runnin' out and in,  
And then I just maun greet.  
I ken it's fancy a'  
And faster flows the tear,  
That my a' dwined awa',  
Sin' the fa' o' the year.

You have said good-bye to a dear friend who has

stayed a few days with you, and whom you will not see again for long : and you have, for a while, felt the house very blank without him. Did you ever think how the house would seem, without yourself ? Have you fancied yourself gone ; and the place, blank of that figure you know ? *When I am gone* ; let us not say these words unless seriously ; they express what is, to each of us the most serious of all facts. *The May Queen* has few lines which touch me more than these : —

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie dear ;  
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer here.

Lord Macaulay, a few years before he died, had something presented to him at a great public meeting in Scotland ; something which pleased him much. “ I shall treasure it,” he said, “ as long as I live ; and *after I am gone* ” — There the great man’s voice faltered, and the sentence remained unfinished. Yet the thought at which Macaulay broke down, may touch many a lesser man more. For when we are gone, my friends, we may leave behind us those who cannot well spare us. It is not for one’s own sake, that the *Gone*, so linked with one’s own name, touches so much. We have had enough of this world before very long ; and (as Uncle Tom expressed it) “ heaven is better than Kentuck.” But we can think of some, for whose sake we may wish to put off our going as long as may be. “ Our minister,” said a Scotch rustic, “ aye preaches aboot goin’ to heaven ; but he’ll never go to heaven as long as he can get stoppin’ at Drumsleekie.”

No doubt, that fit of toothache may be gone ; or that unwelcome guest who stayed with you three weeks

whether you would or not; as well as the thing or the friend you most value. And there is the auctioneer's *Goings, going*, as well as this July sun going down in glory. But I defy you to vulgarize the word. The water which makes the Atlantic will always be a sublime sight, though you may have a little of it in a dirty puddle. And though the stupid bore who comes when you are busy, and wastes your time, may tell you when you happily get rid of him, that he will often come back again to see you (ignorant that you instantly direct your servant never to admit him more), even *that* cannot detract from the beauty of Mr. Tennyson's lines, in which the dying girl, as she is going, tells her mother that after she is gone, she will (if it may be) often come back : —

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my resting-place;  
Though you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon your face:  
Though I cannot speak a word, I shall hearken what you say,  
And be often, often with you, when you think I'm far away.



## CHAPTER V.

### CONCERNING PEOPLE OF WHOM MORE MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE.

**I**T is recorded in history that at a certain public dinner in America a Methodist preacher was called on to give a toast. It may be supposed that the evening was so far advanced, that every person present had been toasted already, and also all the friends of every one present. It thus happened that the Methodist preacher was in considerable perplexity as to the question, what being, or class of beings, should form the subject of his toast. But the good man was a person of large sympathies; and some happy link of association recalled to his mind certain words with which he had a professional familiarity, and which set forth a subject of a most comprehensive character. Arising from his seat, the Methodist preacher said that, without troubling the assembled company with any preliminary observations, he begged to propose the health of **ALL PEOPLE THAT ON EARTH DO DWELL.**

Not unnaturally, I have thought of that Methodist preacher and his toast as I begin to write this essay. For though its subject was suggested to me by various little things of very small concern to mankind in general, though of great interest to one or two individual beings,

I now discern that the subject of this essay is in truth as comprehensive as the subject of that toast. I have something to say *Concerning People of whom More might have been Made*: I see now that the class which I have named includes every human being. More might have been made, in some respect, possibly in many respects, of *All people that on earth do dwell*. Physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually, more might have been made of all. Wise and diligent training on the part of others; self-denial, industry, tact, decision, promptitude, on the part of the man himself; might have made something far better than he now is of every man that breathes. No one is made the most of. There have been human beings who have been made the most of as regards some one thing; who have had some single power developed to the utmost; but no one is made the most of, all round; no one is even made the most of as regards the two or three most important things of all. And indeed it is curious to observe that the things in which human beings seem to have attained to absolute perfection, have for the most part been things comparatively frivolous; accomplishments which certainly were not worth the labor and the time which it must have cost to master them. Thus, M. Blondin has probably made as much of himself as can be made of mortal, in the respect of walking on a rope stretched at a great height from the ground. Hazlitt makes mention of a man who had cultivated to the very highest degree the art of playing at rackets; and who accordingly played at rackets incomparably better than any one else ever did. A wealthy gentleman, lately deceased, by putting his whole mind to the pursuit, esteemed himself to have reached entire perfection in the matter of killing otters. Various individuals have probably developed the power

of turning somersets, of picking pockets, of playing on the piano, jew's-harp, banjo, and penny trumpet, of mental calculation in arithmetic, of insinuating evil about their neighbors without directly asserting anything, — to a measure as great as is possible to man. Long practice and great concentration of mind upon these things, have sufficed to produce what might seem to tremble on the verge of perfection : what unquestionably leaves the attainments of ordinary people at an inconceivable distance behind. But I do not call it making the most of a man, to develop, even to perfection, the power of turning somersets and playing at rackets. I call it making the most of a man, when you make the best of his best powers and qualities ; when you take those things about him which are the worthiest and most admirable, and cultivate these up to their highest attainable degree. And it is in this sense that the statement is to be understood, that no one is made the most of. Even in the best, we see no more than the rudiments of good qualities which might have been developed into a great deal more ; and in very many human beings, proper management might have brought out qualities essentially different from those which these beings now possess. It is not merely that they are rough diamonds, which might have been polished into blazing ones ; not merely that they are thoroughbred colts drawing coal-carts, which with fair training would have been new Eclipses : it is that they are vinegar which might have been wine, poison which might have been food, wild-cats which might have been harmless lambs, soured miserable wretches who might have been happy and useful, almost devils who might have been but a little lower than the angels. Oh the unutterable sadness that is in the thought of what might have been !

Not always, indeed. Sometimes, as we look back, it is with deep thankfulness that we see the point at which we were (we cannot say how) inclined to take the right turning, when we were all but resolved to take that which we can now see would have landed us in wreck and ruin. And it is fit that we should correct any morbid tendency to brood upon the fancy of how much better we might have been, by remembering also how much worse we might have been. Sometimes the present state of matters, good or bad, is the result of long training; of influences that were at work through many years; and that produced their effect so gradually that we never remarked the steps of the process, till some day we waken up to a sense of the fact, and find ourselves perhaps a great deal better, probably a great deal worse, than we had been vaguely imagining. But the case is not unfrequently otherwise. Sometimes one testing time decided whether we should go to the left or to the right. There are in the moral world things analogous to the sudden accident which makes a man blind or lame for life: in an instant there is wrought a permanent deterioration. Perhaps a few minutes before man or woman took the step which can never be retraced, which must banish them forever from all they hold dear, and compel them to seek in some new country far away a place where to hide their shame and misery, they had just as little thought of taking that miserable step as you, my reader, have of taking one like it. And perhaps there are human beings in this world, held in the highest esteem, and with not a speck on their snow-white reputation, who know within themselves that they have barely escaped the gulf; that the moment has been in which all their future lot was trembling in the balance; and that

a grain's weight more in the scale of evil, and by this time they might have been reckoned among the most degraded and abandoned of the race. But probably the first deviation, either to right or left, is in most cases a very small one. You know, my friend, what is meant by the *points* upon a railway. By moving a lever, the rails upon which the train is advancing are, at a certain place, broadened or narrowed by about the eighth of an inch. That little movement decides whether the train shall go north or south. Twenty carriages have come so far together; but here is a junction station, and the train is to be divided. The first ten carriages deviate from the main line by a fraction of an inch at first; but in a few minutes the two portions of the train are flying on, miles apart. You cannot see the one from the other, save by distant puffs of white steam through the clumps of trees. Perhaps already a high hill has intervened, and each train is on its solitary way — one to end its course, after some hours, amid the roar and smoke and bare ugliness of some huge manufacturing town; and the other to come through green fields to the quaint, quiet, dreamy-looking little city, whose place is marked, across the plain, by the noble spire of the gray cathedral rising into the summer blue. We come to such points in our journey through life: railway-points (as it were), which decide not merely our lot in life, but even what kind of folk we shall be, morally and intellectually. A hair's-breadth may make the deviation at first. Two situations are offered you at once: you think there is hardly anything to choose between them. It does not matter which you accept; and perhaps some slight and fanciful consideration is allowed to turn the scale. But now you look back, and you can see that *there* was the turning-

point in your life ; it was because you went there to the right, and not to the left, that you are now a great English prelate and not a humble Scotch professor. Was there not a time in a certain great man's life, at which the lines of rail diverged, and at which the question was settled, should he be a minister of the Scotch Kirk, or should he be Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain ? I can imagine a stage in the history of a lad in a counting-house, at which the little angle of rail may be pushed in or pushed back that shall send the train to one of two places five hundred miles asunder ; it may depend upon whether he shall take or not take that half-crown, whether, thirty years after, he shall be taking the chair, a rubicund baronet, at a missionary society meeting, and receive the commendations of philanthropic peers and earnest bishops ; or be laboring in chains at Norfolk Island, a brutalized, cursing, hardened, scourge-scarred, despairing wretch, without a hope for this life or the other. Oh, how much may turn upon a little thing ! Because the railway train in which you were coming to a certain place was stopped by a snow-storm, the whole character of your life may have been changed. Because some one was in the drawing-room when you went to see Miss Smith on a certain day, resolved to put to her a certain question, you missed the tide, you lost your chance, you went away to Australia and never saw her more. It fell upon a day that a ship, coming from Melbourne, was weathering a rocky point on an iron-bound coast, and was driven close upon that perilous shore. They tried to put her about ; it was the last chance. It was a moment of awful risk and decision. If the wind catches the sails, now shivering as the ship comes up, on the right side, then all on board are safe. If the wind

catches the sails on the other side, then all on board must perish. And so it all depends upon which surface of certain square yards of canvas the uncertain breeze shall strike, whether John Smith, who is coming home from the diggings with twenty thousand pounds, shall go down and never be heard of again by his poor mother and sisters away in Scotland; or whether he shall get safely back, a rich man, to gladden their hearts, and buy a pretty little place, and improve the house on it into the pleasantest picture; and purchase, and ride, and drive various horses; and be seen on market days sauntering in the High-street of the county town; and get married, and run about the lawn before his door, chasing his little children; and become a decent elder of the Church; and live quietly and happily for many years. Yes: from what precise point of the compass the next flaw of wind should come, would decide the question between the long homely life in Scotland, and a nameless burial deep in a foreign sea.

It seems to me to be one of the main characteristics of human beings, not that they actually are much, but that they are something of which much may be made. There are untold potentialities in human nature. The tree cut down, concerning which its heathen owner debated whether he should make it into a god or into a three-legged stool, was positively nothing in its capacity of coming to different ends and developments, when we compare it with each human being born into this world. Man is not so much a thing already, as he is the germ of something. He is (so to speak) material formed to the hand of circumstances. He is essentially a germ, either of good or evil. And he is not like the seed of a plant, in whose development the tether allows no wider range than that between the more or less successful manifestation of its inherent

nature. Give a young tree fair play: good soil and abundant air; tend it carefully, in short, and you will have a noble tree. Treat the young tree unfairly: give it a bad soil, deprive it of needful air and light, and it will grow up a stunted and poor tree. But in the case of the human being, there is more than this difference in degree. There may be a difference in kind. The human being may grow up to be (as it were) a fair and healthful fruit tree, or to be a poisonous one. There is something positively awful about the potentialities that are in human nature. The Archbishop of Canterbury might have grown up under influences which would have made him a bloodthirsty pirate or a sneaking pickpocket. The pirate or the pickpocket, taken at the right time, and trained in the right way, might have been made a pious exemplary man. You remember that good divine, two hundred years since, who, standing in the market-place of a certain town, and seeing a poor wretch led by him to the gallows, said, "There goes myself, but for the grace of God." Of course, it is needful that human laws should hold all men as equally responsible. The punishment of such an offence is such an infliction, no matter who committed the offence. At least the mitigating circumstances which human laws can take into account must be all of a very plain and intelligible character. It would not do to recognize anything like a graduated scale of responsibility. A very bad training in youth would be in a certain limited sense regarded as lessening the guilt of any wrong thing done; and you may remember accordingly how that magnanimous monarch, Charles II., urged to the Scotch lords, in extenuation of the wrong things he had done, that his father had given him a very bad education. But though human laws and judges may

rainly and clumsily endeavor to fix each wrong-doer's place in the scale of responsibility ; and though they must, in a rough way, do what is rough justice in five cases out of six ; still we may well believe that in the view of the Supreme Judge the responsibilities of men are most delicately graduated to their opportunities. There is One who will appreciate with entire accuracy the amount of guilt that is in each wrong deed of each wrongdoer. and mercifully allow for such as never had a chance of being anything but wrongdoers. And it will not matter whether it was from original constitution or from unhappy training that these poor creatures never had that chance. I was lately quite astonished to learn that some sincere but stupid American divines have fallen foul of the eloquent author of *Elsie Venner*, and accused him of fearful heresy, because he declared his confident belief that " God would never make a man with a crooked spine and then punish him for not standing upright." Why, that statement of the *Autocrat* appears to me at least as certain as that two and two make four. It may indeed contain some recondite and malignant reference which the stupid American divines know, and which I do not : it may be a mystic Shibboleth indicating far more than it asserts ; as at one time in Scotland it was esteemed as proof that a clergyman preached unsound doctrine if he made use of the Lord's Prayer. But, understanding it simply as meaning that the Judge of all the earth will do right, it appears to me an axiom beyond all question. And I take it as putting in a compact form the spirit of what I have been arguing for—to wit, that though human law must of necessity hold all rational beings as alike responsible, yet in the eye of God the difference may be immense. The graceful vase that stands in the drawing-room under a

glass shade, and never goes to the well, has no great right to despise the rough pitcher that goes often and is broken at last. It is fearful to think what malleable material we are in the hands of circumstances. And a certain Authority, considerably wiser and incomparably more charitable than the American divines already mentioned, has recognized the fact when He taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation!" We shall think, in a little while, of certain influences which may make or mar the human being; but it may be said here, that I firmly believe that happiness is one of the best of disciplines. As a general rule, if people were happier, they would be better. When you see a poor cabman on a winter day, soaked with rain, and fevered with gin, violently thrashing the wretched horse he is driving, and perhaps howling at it, you may be sure that it is just because the poor cabman is so miserable that he is doing all that. It is a sudden glimpse, perhaps, of his bare home and hungry children, and of the dreary future which lies before himself and them, that was the true cause of those two or three furious lashes you saw him deal upon the unhappy screw's ribs. Whenever I read any article in a review, which is manifestly malignant, and intended not to improve an author but to give him pain, I cannot help immediately wondering what may have been the matter with the man who wrote the malignant article. Something must have been making him very unhappy, I think. I do not allude to playful attacks upon a man, made in pure thoughtlessness and buoyancy of spirit; but to attacks which indicate a settled, deliberate, calculating rancor. Never be angry with the man who makes such an attack; you ought to be sorry for him. It is out of great misery

that malignity for the most part proceeds. To give the ordinary mortal a fair chance, let him be reasonably successful and happy. Do not worry a man into nervous irritability, and he will be amiable. Do not dip a man in water, and he will not be wet.

Of course, my friend, I know who is to you the most interesting of all beings ; and whose history is the most interesting of all histories. *You* are to yourself the centre of this world, and of all the interests of this world. And this is quite right. There is no selfishness about all this, except that selfishness which forms an essential element in personality ; that selfishness which must go with the fact of one's having a self. You cannot help looking at all things as they appear from your own point of view ; and things press themselves upon your attention and your feeling as they affect yourself. And apart from anything like egotism, or like vain self-conceit, it is probable that you may know that a great deal depends upon your exertion and your life. There are those at home who would fare but poorly if you were just now to die. There are those who must rise with you if you rise, and sink with you if you sink. Does it sometimes suddenly strike you, what a little object you are, to have so much depending on you ? Vaguely, in your thinking and feeling, you add your circumstances and your lot to your personality ; and these make up an object of considerable extension. You do so with other people as well as with yourself. You have all their belongings as a background to the picture of them which you have in your mind ; and they look very little when you see them in fact, because you see them without these belongings. I remember when a boy, how disappointed I was at first seeing the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was Archbishop Howley.

There he was, a slender pale old gentleman, sitting in an arm-chair at a public meeting. I was chiefly disappointed, because there was *so little* of him. There was just the human being. There was no background of grand accessories. The idea of the Primate of England which I had in some confused manner in my mind, included a vision of the venerable towers of Lambeth, — of a long array of solemn predecessors, from Thomas A'Becket downwards, — of great historical occasions on which the Archbishop of Canterbury had been a prominent figure; and in some way I fancied, vaguely, that you would see the primate surrounded by all these things. You remember the highlander in *Waverley* who was much mortified when his chief came to meet an English guest, unattended by any retinue; and who exclaimed in consternation and sorrow, "He has come without his tail!" Even such was my early feeling. You understand, later, that associations are not visible; and that they do not add to a man's extension in space. But (to go back) you do, as regards yourself, what you do as regards greater men; you add your lot to your personality, and thus you make up a bigger object. And when you see yourself in your tailor's shop, in a large mirror (one of a series) wherein you see your figure all round, reflected several times, your feeling will probably be, what a little thing you are! If you are a wise man, you will go away somewhat humbled, and possibly somewhat the better for the sight. You have, to a certain extent, done what Burns thought it would do all men much good to do; you have "seen yourself as others see you." And even to do so physically, is a step towards a juster and humbler estimate of yourself in more important things. It may here be said as a further illustration

of the principle set forth, that people who stay very much at home, feel their stature, bodily and mental, much lessened when they go far away from home, and spend a little time among strange scenes and people. For, going thus away from home, you take only yourself. It is but a small part of your extension that goes. You go ; but you leave behind your house, your study, your children, your servants, your horses, your garden. And not only do you leave them behind ; but they grow misty and unsubstantial when you are far away from them. And somehow you feel that when you make the acquaintance of a new friend some hundreds of miles off, who never saw your home and your family, you present yourself before him, only a twentieth part or so of what you feel yourself to be when you have all your belongings about you. Do you not feel all that ? And do you not feel, that if you were to go away to Australia for ever, almost as the English coast turned blue and then invisible on the horizon, your life in England would first turn cloud-like, and then melt away ?

But without further discussing the philosophy of how it comes to be, I return to the statement that you yourself, as you live in your home, are to yourself the centre of this world ; and that you feel the force of any great principle most deeply, when you feel it in your own case. And though every worthy mortal must be often taken out of himself, especially by seeing the deep sorrows and great failures of other men, still, in thinking of people of whom more might have been made, it touches you most to discern that you are one of these. It is a very sad thing to think of yourself, and to see how much more might have been made of you. Sit down by the fire in winter ; or go out now in summer and sit down under a

tree ; and look back on the moral discipline you have gone through ; look back on what you have done and suffered. Oh how much better and happier you might have been ! And how very near you have often been to what would have made you so much happier and better ! If you had taken the other turning when you took the wrong one, after much perplexity ; if you had refrained from saying such a hasty word ; if you had not thoughtlessly made such a man your enemy ! Such a little thing may have changed the entire complexion of your life. Ah, it was because the points were turned the wrong way at that junction, that you are now running along a line of railway through wild moorlands, leaving the warm champaign below ever more hopelessly behind. Hastily, or pettily, or despairingly, you took the wrong turning ; or you might have been dwelling now amid verdant fields and silver waters in the country of contentment and success. Many men and women, in the temporary bitterness of some disappointment, have hastily made marriages which will embitter all their future life ; or which at least make it certain that in this world they will never know a joyous heart any more. Men have died as almost briefless barristers, toiling into old age in heartless wrangling, who had their chance of high places on the bench ; but ambitiously resolved to wait for something higher ; and so missed the tide. Men in the church have taken the wrong path at some critical time ; and doomed themselves to all the pangs of disappointed ambition. But I think a sincere man in the church has a great advantage over almost all ordinary disappointed men. He has less temptation, reading affairs by the light of after-time, to look back with bitterness on any mistake he may have made. For if he be the man I mean, he took the deci-

sive step not without seeking the best of guidance ; and the whole training of his mind has fitted him for seeing a higher Hand in the allotment of human conditions. And if a man acted for the best, according to the light he had ; and if he truly believes that God puts all in their places in life : he may look back without bitterness upon what may appear the most grievous mistakes. I must be suffered to add, that if he is able heartily to hold certain great truths, and to rest on certain sure promises, hardly any conceivable earthly lot should stamp him a soured or disappointed man. If it be a sober truth, that "all things shall work together for good" to a certain order of mankind ; and if the deepest sorrows in this world may serve to prepare us for a better ; why, then, I think that one might hold by a certain ancient philosopher (and something more), who said "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content !"

You see, reader, that in thinking of *People of whom more might have been made*, we are limiting the scope of the subject. I am not thinking how more might have been made of us originally. No doubt the potter had power over the clay. Give a larger brain, of finer quality, and the commonplace man might have been a Milton. A little change in the chemical composition of the gray matter of that little organ which is unquestionably connected with the mind's working as no other organ of the body is, and oh, what a different order of thought would have rolled off from your pen when you sat down and tried to write your best ! If we are to believe Robert Burns, some people have been made more of than was originally intended. A certain poem records how that which, in his homely phrase, he calls "stuff to mak' a

swine," was ultimately converted into a very poor specimen of a human being. The poet had no irreverent intention, I dare say; but I am not about to go into the field of speculation which is opened up by his words. I know indeed that in the hands of the Creator each of us might have been made a different man. The pounds of material which were fashioned into Shakespeare might have made a bumpkin with little thought beyond pigs and turnips; or, by some slight difference beyond man's skill to trace, might have made an idiot. A little infusion of energy into the mental constitution might have made the mild, pensive day-dreamer who is wandering listlessly by the river-side, sometimes chancing upon noble thoughts, which he does not carry out into action, and does not even write down on paper, into an active worker, with Arnold's keen look, who would have carved out a great career for himself, and exercised a real influence over the views and conduct of numbers of other men. A very little alteration in feature might have made a plain face into a beautiful one, and some slight change in the position or the contractibility of certain of the muscles might have made the most awkward of manners and gaits into the most dignified and graceful. All *that* we all understand. But my present subject is the making which is in circumstances after our natural disposition is fixed—the training, coming from a hundred quarters, which forms the material supplied by nature into the character which each of us actually bears. And setting apart the case of great genius, whose bent towards the thing in which it will excel is so strong that it will find its own field by inevitable selection, and whose strength is such that no unfavorable circumstances can hold it down, almost any ordinary hu-

man being may be formed into almost any development. I know a huge massive beam of rough iron, which supports a great weight. Whenever I pass it, I cannot help giving it a pat with my hand, and saying to it, "You might have been hair-springs for watches." I know an odd-looking little man attached to a certain railway-station, whose business it is when a train comes in to go round it with a large box of a yellow concoction, and supply grease to the wheels. I have often looked out of the carriage-window at that odd little man, and thought to myself, "Now you might have been a chief justice." And indeed I can say from personal observation, that the stuff ultimately converted into cabinet ministers does not at an early stage at all appreciably differ from that which never becomes more than country parsons. There is a great gulf between the human being who gratefully receives a shilling, and touches his cap as he receives it, and the human being whose income is paid in yearly or half-yearly sums, and to whom a pecuniary tip would appear as an insult; yet of course that great gulf is the result of training alone. John Smith the laborer, with twelve shillings a week, and the bishop with eight thousand a year, had, by original constitution, precisely the same kind of feeling towards that much-sought yet much-abused reality which provides the means of life. Who shall reckon up by what millions of slight touches from the hand of circumstance, extending over many years, the one man is gradually formed into the giving of the shilling, and the other man into the receiving of it with that touch of his hat? Who shall read back the forming influences at work since the days in the cradle, that gradually formed one man into sitting down to dinner, and another man into waiting behind his chair? I think it would be occa-

signally a comfort if one could believe, as American planters profess to believe about their slaves, that there is an original and essential difference between men; for truly the difference in their positions is often so tremendous that it is painful to think that it is the selfsame clay and the selfsame common mind that are promoted to dignity and degraded to servitude. And if *you* sometimes feel *that, you* in whose favor the arrangement tends, what do you suppose your servants sometimes think upon the subject? It was no wonder that the millions of Russia were ready to grovel before their Czar, while they believed that he was "an emanation from the Deity." But in countries where it is quite understood that every man is just as much an emanation from the Deity as any other, you will not long have that sort of thing. You remember Goldsmith's noble lines, which Dr. Johnson never could read without tears, concerning the English character. It is not true that it is just because the humble but intelligent Englishman understands distinctly that we are all of us *people of whom more might have been made*, that he has "learnt to venerate himself as man!" And, thinking of influences which form the character, there is a sad reflection which has often occurred to me. It is, that circumstances often develop a character which it is hard to contemplate without anger and disgust. And yet in many such cases it is rather pity that is due. The more disgusting the character formed in some men, the more you should pity them. Yet it is hard to do *that*. You easily pity the man whom circumstances have made poor and miserable; how much more you should pity the man whom circumstances have made bad. You pity the man from whom some terrible accident has taken a limb or a hand; but how much more should you pity

the man from whom the influences of years have taken a conscience and a heart! And something is to be said for even the most unamiable and worst of the race. No doubt it is mainly their own fault that they are so bad; but still it is hard work to be always rowing against wind and tide, and some people could be good only by doing *that* ceaselessly. I am not thinking now of pirates and pickpockets. But take the case of a sour, backbiting, malicious, wrong-headed, lying old woman, who gives her life to saying disagreeable things and making mischief between friends. There are not many mortals with whom one is less disposed to have patience. But yet, if you knew all, you would not be so severe in what you think and say of her. You do not know the physical irritability of nerve and weakness of constitution which that poor creature may have inherited; you do not know the singular twist of mind which she may have got from nature and from bad and unkind treatment in youth; you do not know the bitterness of heart she has felt at the polite snubbings and ladylike tortures which in excellent society are often the share of the poor and the dependent. If you knew all these things, you would bear more patiently with my friend Miss Lime-juice; though I confess that sometimes you would find it uncommonly hard to do so.

As I wrote that last paragraph, I began dimly to fancy that somewhere I had seen the idea which is its subject treated by an abler hand by far than mine. The idea, you may be sure, was not suggested to me by books, but by what I have seen of men and women. But it is a pleasant thing to find that a thought which at the time is strongly impressing one's self, has impressed other men. And a modest person, who knows very nearly what his

humble mark is, will be quite pleased to find that another man has not only anticipated his thoughts, but has expressed them much better than he could have done. Yea, let me turn to that incomparable essay of John Foster, *On a Man's writing Memoirs of Himself*. Here it is:—

Make the supposition that any given number of persons, a hundred, for instance, taken promiscuously, should be able to write memoirs of themselves so clear and perfect as to explain, to your discernment at least, the entire process by which their minds have attained their present state, recounting all the most impressive circumstances. If they should read these memoirs to you in succession, while your benevolence and the moral principles according to which you felt and estimated, were kept at the highest pitch, you would often, during the disclosure, regret to observe how many things may be the causes of irretrievable mischief. Why is the path of life, you would say, so haunted as if with evil spirits of every diversity of noxious agency, some of which may patiently accompany, or others of which may suddenly cross, the unfortunate wanderer? And you would regret to observe into how many forms of intellectual and moral perversion the human mind readily yields itself to be modified.

I compassionate you, would, in a very benevolent hour, be your language to the wealthy, unfeeling *tyrant of a family and a neighborhood*, who seeks in the overawed timidity and unretaliated injuries of the unfortunate beings within his power, the gratification that should have been sought in their affections. Unless you had brought into the world some extraordinary refractoriness to the influence of evil, the process that you have undergone could not easily fail of being efficacious. If your parents idolized their own importance in their son so much, that they never opposed your inclinations themselves, nor permitted it to be done by any subject to their authority; if the humble companion, sometimes summoned to the honor of amusing you, bore your caprices and insolence with the meekness without which he had lost his enviable privilege; if you could despoil the garden of some nameless dependent neighbor of the carefully reared flowers, and torment his little dog or cat, without his daring to punish you or to appeal to your infatuated parents; if aged men addressed you in a submissive tone, and with the appellation of "Sir," and their aged wives uttered their wonder at your condescension, and pushed their grandchildren away from around the fire for your sake, if you happened, though with the strut of pertness, and your hat on your head,

to enter one of their cottages, perhaps to express your contempt of the homely dwelling, furniture, and fare; if, in maturer life, you associated with vile persons, who would forego the contest of equality to be your allies in trampling on inferiors; and if, both then and since, you have been suffered to deem your wealth the compendium or equivalent of every ability and every good quality — it would indeed be immensely strange if you had not become, in due time, the miscreant, who may thank the power of the laws in civilized society that he is not assaulted with clubs and stones; to whom one could cordially wish the opportunity and the consequences of attempting his tyranny among some such people as those *submissive* sons of nature in the forests of North America; and whose dependents and domestic relatives may be almost forgiven when they shall one day rejoice at his funeral.

What do you think of *that*, my reader, as a specimen of embittered eloquence and nervous pith? It is something to read massive and energetic sense, in days wherein mystical twaddle, and subtlety which hopelessly defies all logic, are sometimes thought extremely fine, if they are set out in a style which is refined into mere effeminacy.

I cherish a very strong conviction (as has been said) that, at least in the case of educated people, happiness is a grand discipline for bringing out what is amiable and excellent. You understand, of course, what I mean by happiness. We all know, of course, that light heartedness is not very familiar to grown-up people, who are doing the work of life — who feel its many cares, and who do not forget the many risks which hang over it. I am not thinking of the kind of thing which is suggested to the minds of children, when they read, at the end of a tale, concerning its heroine and hero, that “they lived happily ever after.” No; we don’t look for that. <sup>1</sup> happiness, I mean freedom from terrible anxiety from pervading depression of spirits: the conscious and that we are filling our place in life with decent *suave*

and approbation : religious principle and character : fair physical health throughout the family ; and moderate good temper and good sense. And I hold, with Sydney Smith, and with that keen practical philosopher, Becky Sharpe, that happiness and success tend very greatly to make people passably good. Well, I see an answer to the statement, as I do to most statements ; but, at least, the beam is never subjected to the strain which would break it. I have seen the gradual working of what I call happiness and success in ameliorating character. I have known a man who, by necessity, by the pressure of poverty, was driven to write for the magazines : a kind of work for which he had no special talent or liking, and which he had never intended to attempt. There was no more miserable, nervous, anxious, disappointed being on earth than he was when he began his writing for the press. And sure enough his articles were bitter and ill-set to a high degree. They were thoroughly ill-natured and bad. They were not devoid of a certain cleverness ; but they were the sour products of a soured nature. But that man gradually got into comfortable circumstances : and with equal step with his lot the tone of his writings mended ; till as a writer he became conspicuous for the healthful, cheerful, and kindly nature of all he produced. I remember seeing a portrait of an eminent author, taken a good many years ago, at a time when he was struggling into notice, and when he was being very severely handled by the critics. That portrait was really truculent of aspect. It was sour, and even ferocious-looking. appears afterwards I saw that author, at a time when he <sup>subm</sup> attained vast success, and was universally recognized <sup>wive</sup> great man. How improved that face ! All the <sup>grand</sup> <sup>soned</sup> lines were gone : the bitter look was gone : the great

man looked quite genial and amiable. And I came to know that he really was all he looked. Bitter judgments of men, imputations of evil motives, disbelief in anything noble or generous, a disposition to repeat tales to the prejudice of others, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness,—all these things may possibly come out of a bad heart; but they certainly came out of a miserable one. The happier any human being is, the better and more kindly he thinks of all. It is the man who is always worried, whose means are uncertain, whose home is uncomfortable, whose nerves are rasped by some kind friend who daily repeats and enlarges upon everything disagreeable for him to hear: it is he who thinks hardly of the character and prospects of humankind, and who believes in the essential and unimprovable badness of the race.

This is not a treatise on the formation of character: it pretends to nothing like completeness. If this essay were to extend to a volume of about three hundred and eighty pages, I might be able to set out and discuss, in something like a full and orderly fashion, the influences under which human beings grow up, and the way in which to make the best of the best of these influences, and to evade or neutralize the worst. And if, after great thought and labor, I had produced such a volume, I am well aware that nobody would read it. So I prefer to briefly glance at a few aspects of a great subject just as they present themselves, leaving the complete discussion of it to solid individuals with more leisure at their command.

Physically, no man is made the most of. Look at an acrobat or a boxer: *there* is what your limbs might have

to his arms, looking fixedly into distance, and his bosom swelling with the lofty belief that out of four or five thousand persons who were present, there was not one who, to save his life, could have done what he was doing so easily.

So much of physical dexterity. As for physical grace, it will be admitted that in that respect more might be made of most human beings. It is not merely that they are ugly and awkward naturally, but that they are ugly and awkward artificially. Sir Bulwer Lytton in his earlier writings was accustomed to maintain that just as it is a man's duty to cultivate his mental powers, so is it his duty to cultivate his bodily appearance. And doubtless all the gifts of nature are talents committed to us to be improved; they are things intrusted to us to make the best of. It may be difficult to fix the point at which the care of personal appearance in man or woman becomes excessive. It does so unquestionably when it engrosses the mind to the neglect of more important things. But I suppose that all reasonable people now believe that scrupulous attention to personal cleanliness, freshness, and neatness, is a Christian duty. The days are past almost everywhere in which piety was held as associated with dirt. Nobody would mention now as a proof how saintly a human being was, that (for the love of God) he had never washed his face or brushed his hair for thirty years. And even scrupulous neatness need bring with it no suspicion of puppyism. The most trim and tidy of old men was good John Wesley; and he conveyed to the minds of all who saw him the notion of a man whose treasure was laid up beyond this world, quite as much as if he had dressed in such a fashion as to make himself an object of ridicule, or as if he had forsworn the use of soap.

Some people fancy that slovenliness of attire indicates a mind above petty details. I have seen an eminent preacher ascend the pulpit, with his bands hanging over his right shoulder, his gown apparently put on by being dropped upon him from the vestry ceiling, and his hair apparently unbrushed for several weeks. There was no suspicion of affectation about that good man; yet I regarded his untidiness as a defect and not as an excellence. He gave a most eloquent sermon; yet I thought it would have been well had the lofty mind that treated so admirably some of the grandest realities of life and of immortality, been able to address itself a little to the care of lesser things. I confess that when I heard the Bishop of Oxford preach, I thought the effect of his sermon was increased by the decorous and careful fashion in which he was arrayed in his robes. And it is to be admitted that the grace of the human aspect may be in no small measure enhanced by bestowing a little pains upon it. You, youthful matron, when you take your little children to have their photographs taken, and when their nurse in contemplation of that event attired them in their most tasteful dresses, and arranged their hair in its prettiest curls, you know that the little things looked a great deal better than they do on common days. It is pure nonsense to say that beauty when unadorned is adorned the most. For that is as much as to say that a pretty young woman, in the matter of physical appearance, is a person of whom no more can be made. Now taste and skill can make more of almost anything. And you will set down Thomson's lines as flatly opposed to fact, when your lively young cousin walks into your room to let you see her before she goes out to an evening party; and when you compare that radiant vision, in her robes of misty texture,

and with hair arranged in folds the most complicated — wreathed, and satin shod — with the homely figure that took a walk with you that afternoon, russet-gowned, tartan-plaided, and shod with serviceable boots for tramping through country mud. One does not think of loveliness in the case of men, because they have not got any: but their aspect, such as it is, is mainly made by their tailors. And it is a lamentable thought, how very ill the clothes of most men are made. I think that the art of draping the male human body has been brought to much less excellence by the mass of those who practise it, than any other of the useful and ornamental arts. Tailors, even in great cities, are generally extremely bad. Or it may be that the providing of the human frame with decent and well-fitting garments is so very difficult a thing, that (save by a great genius here and there) it can be no more than approximated to. As for tailors in little country villages, their power of distorting and disfiguring is wonderful. When I used to be a country clergyman, I remember how, when I went to the funeral of some simple rustic, I was filled with surprise to see the tall, strapping, fine young country lads, arrayed in their black suits. What awkward figures they looked in those unwonted garments! How different from their easy, natural appearance in their every-day fustian! Here you would see a young fellow, with a coat whose huge collar covered half his head when you looked at him from behind; a very common thing was to have sleeves which entirely concealed the hands; and the wrinkled and baggy aspect of the whole suits could be imagined only by such as have seen them. It may be remarked here, that those strong country lads were in another respect people of whom more might have been physically made. Oh for a drill-

sergeant to teach them to stand upright, and to turn out their toes ; and to get rid of that slouching, hulking gait which gives such a look of clumsiness and stupidity ! If you could but have the well-developed muscles and the fresh complexion of the country, with the smartness and alertness of the town ! You have there the rough material of which a vast deal may be made ; you have the water-worn pebble which will take on a beautiful polish. Take from the moorland cottage the shepherd-lad of sixteen ; send him to a Scotch college for four years ; let him be tutor in a good family for a year or two ; and (if he be an observant fellow) you will find in him the quiet, self-possessed air and the easy address of the gentleman who has seen the world. And it is curious to see one brother of a family thus educated and polished into refinement, while the other three or four, remaining in their father's simple lot, retain its rough manners and its unsophisticated feelings. Well, look at the man who has been made a gentleman, probably by the hard labor and sore self-denial of the others ; and see in him what each of the others might have been ! Look with respect on the diamond which needed only to be polished. Reverence the undeveloped potential which circumstances have held down. Look with interest on these people of whom more might have been made !

Such a sight as this sometimes sets us thinking how many germs of excellence are in this world turned to no account. You see the polished diamond and the rough one side by side. It is too late now ; but the dull colorless pebble might have been the bright glancing gem. And you may polish the material diamond at any time ; but if you miss your season in the case of the human one, the loss can never be repaired. The bumpkin who is a

bumpkin at thirty, must remain a bumpkin to threescore and ten. But another thing that makes us think how many fair possibilities are lost, is to remark the fortuitous way in which great things have often been done; and done by people who never dreamt that they had in them the power to do anything particular. These cases, one cannot but think, are samples of millions more. There have been very popular writers who were brought out by mere accident. They did not know what precious vein of thought they had at command, till they stumbled upon it as if by chance, like the Indian at the mines of Potosi. It is not much that we know of Shakespeare, but it seems certain that it was in patching up old plays for acting that he discovered within himself a capacity for producing that which men will not easily let die. When a young military man, disheartened with the service, sought for an appointment as an Irish Commissioner of Excise, and was sadly disappointed because he did not get it, it is probable that he had as little idea as any one else had that he possessed that aptitude for the conduct of war which was to make him the Duke of Wellington. And when a young mathematician, entirely devoid of ambition, desired to settle quietly down, and devote all his life to that unexciting study, he was not aware that he was a person of whom more was to be made;—who was to grow into the great Emperor Napoleon. I had other instances in my mind, but after these last it is needless to mention them. But such cases suggest to us that there may have been many Folletts who never held a brief, many Keans who never acted but in barns, many Vandyks who never earned more than sixpence a day, many Goldsmiths who never were better than penny-a-liners, many Michaels who never built their St. Peters; and

perhaps a Shakespeare who held horses at the theatre door for pence, as the Shakespeare we know of did, and who stopped there.

Let it here be suggested, that it is highly illogical to conclude that you are yourself a person of whom a great deal more might have been made, merely because you are a person of whom it is the fact that very little has actually been made. This suggestion may appear a truism; but it is one of those simple truths of which we all need to be occasionally reminded. After all, the great test of what a man can do, must be what a man does. But there are folk who live on the reputation of being pebbles capable of receiving a very high polish, though from circumstances they did not choose to be polished. There are people who stand high in general estimation on the ground of what they might have done if they had liked. You will find students who took no honors at the university, but who endeavor to impress their friends with the notion that if they had chosen, they could have attained to unexampled eminence. And sometimes, no doubt, there are great powers that run to waste. There have been men whose doings, splendid as they were, were no more than a hint of how much more they could have done. In such a case as that of Coleridge, you see how the lack of steady industry, and of all sense of responsibility, abated the tangible result of the noble intellect God gave him. But as a general rule, and in the case of ordinary people, you need not give a man credit for the possession of any powers beyond those which he has actually exhibited. If a boy is at the bottom of his class, it is probably because he could not attain its top. My friend Mr. Snarling thinks he can write much better articles than those which appear in any of the magazines.

but as he has not done so, I am not inclined to give him credit for the achievement. But you can see that this principle of estimating people's abilities not by what they have done, but by what they think they could do, will be much approved by persons who are stupid, and at the same time conceited. It is a pleasing arrangement that every man should fix his own mental mark, and hold by his estimate of himself. And then, never measuring his strength with others, he can suppose that he could have beat them if he had tried.

Yes, we are all mainly fashioned by circumstances; and had the circumstances been more propitious, they might have made a great deal more of us. You sometimes think, middle-aged man, who never have passed the limits of Britain, what an effect might have been produced upon your views and character by foreign travel. You think what an indefinite expansion of mind it might have caused; how many narrow prejudices it might have rubbed away; how much wiser and better a man it might have made you. Or more society and wider reading in your early youth might have improved you; might have taken away the shyness and the intrusive individuality which you sometimes feel painfully; might have called out one cannot say what of greater confidence and larger sympathy. How very little, you think to yourself, you have seen and known! While others skim great libraries, you read the same few books over and over; while others come to know many lands and cities, and the faces and ways of many men, you look, year after year, on the same few square miles of this world, and you have to form your notion of human nature from the study of but few human beings, and these very commonplace. Perhaps it is as well. It is not so certain that more would

have been made of you if you had enjoyed what might seem greater advantages. Perhaps you learned more by studying the little field before you earnestly and long, than you would have learned if you had bestowed a cursory glance upon fields more extensive by far. Perhaps there was compensation for the fewness of the cases you had to observe, in the keenness with which you were able to observe them. Perhaps the Great Disposer saw that in your case the pebble got nearly all the polishing it would stand; the man nearly all the chances he could improve.

If there be soundness and justice in this suggestion, it may afford consolation to a considerable class of men and women. I mean those people who, feeling within themselves many defects of character, and discerning in their outward lot much which they would wish other than it is, are ready to think that some one thing would have put them right; that some one thing would put them right even yet; but something which they have hopelessly missed, something which can never be. There was just one testing event, which stood between them and their being made a vast deal more of. They would have been far better and far happier, they think, had some single malign influence been kept away which has darkened all their life; or had some single blessing been given which would have made it happy. If you had got such a parish which you did not get; if you had married such a woman; if your little child had not died; if you had always the society and sympathy of such an energetic and hopeful friend; if the scenery round your dwelling were of a different character; if the neighboring town were four miles off instead of fifteen; if any one of these circumstances had been altered, what a dif-

ferent man you might have been! Probably many people, even of middle age, conscious that the manifold cares and worries of life forbid that it should be evenly joyous, do yet cherish, at the bottom of their heart, some vague yet rooted fancy, that if but one thing were given on which they had set their hearts, or one care removed forever, they would be perfectly happy, even here. Perhaps you overrate the effect which would have been produced on your character by such a single cause. It might not have made you much better; it might not even have made you very different. And assuredly you are wrong in fancying that any such single thing could have made you happy; that is, entirely happy. Nothing in this world could ever make you *that*. It is not God's purpose that we should be entirely happy here. "This is not our rest." The day will never come which will not bring its worry. And the possibility of terrible misfortune and sorrow hangs over all. There is but one place where we shall be right; and *that* is far away.

Yes, more might have been made of all of us; probably, in the case of most, not much more *will* be made in this world. We are now, if we have reached middle life, very much what we shall be to the end of the chapter. We shall not, in this world, be much better; let us humbly trust that we shall not be worse. Yet, if there be an undefinable sadness in looking at the marred material of which so much more might have been made, there is a sublime hopefulness in the contemplation of material, bodily and mental, of which a great deal more and better will certainly yet be made. Not much more may be made of any of us in life; but who shall estimate

what may be made of us in immortality? Think of a "spiritual body;" think of a perfectly pure and happy soul! I thought of this on a beautiful evening of this summer, walking with a much valued friend through a certain grand ducal domain. In front of a noble sepulchre, where is laid up much aristocratic dust, there are sculptured by some great artist, three colossal faces, which are meant to represent Life, Death, and Immortality. It was easy to represent death: the face was one of solemn rest, with closed eyes; and the sculptor's skill was mainly shown in distinguishing Life from Immortality. And he had done it well. *There* was Life, a careworn, anxious, weary face, that seemed to look at you earnestly, and with a vague inquiry for something — the something that is lacking in all things here. And *there* was Immortality: life-like, but oh! how different from mortal Life! *There* was the beautiful face; calm, satisfied, self-possessed, sublime; and with eyes looking far away. I see it yet, the crimson sunset warming the gray stone; and a great hawthorn tree, covered with blossoms, standing by. Yes, *there* was Immortality; and you felt, as you looked at it, that it was **MORE MADE OF LIFE!**



## CHAPTER VI.

### CONCERNING PEOPLE WHO CARRIED WEIGHT IN LIFE.

WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON THOSE WHO NEVER HAD  
A CHANCE.

**Y**OU drive out, let us suppose, upon a certain day. To your surprise and mortification, your horse, usually lively and frisky, is quite dull and sluggish. He does not get over the ground as he is wont to do. The slightest touch of whipcord, on other days, suffices to make him dart forward with redoubled speed; but upon this day, after two or three miles, he needs positive whipping, and he runs very sulkily with it all. By and bye his coat, usually smooth and glossy and dry through all reasonable work, begins to stream like a water-cart. This will not do. There is something wrong. You investigate; and you discover that your horse's work, though seemingly the same as usual, is in fact immensely greater. The blockheads who oiled your wheels yesterday have screwed up your patent axles too tightly; the friction is enormous; the hotter the metal gets, the greater grows the friction; your horse's work is quadrupled. You drive slowly home; and severely upbraid the blockheads.

There are many people who have to go through life at an analogous disadvantage. There is something in

their constitution of body or mind ; there is something in their circumstances ; which adds incalculably to the exertion they must go through to attain their ends ; and which holds them back from doing what they might otherwise have done. Very probably, that malign something exerted its influence unperceived by those around them. They did not get credit for the struggle they were making. No one knew what a brave fight they were making with a broken right arm ; no one remarked that they were running the race, and keeping a fair place in it too, with their legs tied together. All they do, they do at a disadvantage. It is as when a noble race-horse is beaten by a sorry hack ; because the race-horse, as you might see if you look at the list, is carrying twelve pounds additional. But such men, by a desperate effort, often made silently and sorrowfully, may (so to speak) run in the race ; and do well in it ; though you little think with how heavy a foot and how heavy a heart. There are others, who have no chance at all. *They* are like a horse set to run a race, tied by a strong rope to a tree ; or weighted with ten tons of extra burden. *That* horse cannot run, even poorly. The difference between their case and that of the men who are placed at a disadvantage, is like the difference between setting a very near-sighted man to keep a sharp look-out, and setting a man who is quite blind to keep that sharp look-out. Many can do the work of life with difficulty ; some cannot do it at all. In short, there are PEOPLE WHO CARRY WEIGHT IN LIFE ; and there are some WHO NEVER HAVE A CHANCE.

And you, my friend, who are doing the work of life well and creditably : you who are running in the front rank, and likely to do so to the end ; think kindly and

charitably of those who have broken down in the race. Think kindly of him who, sadly over-weighted, is struggling onwards away half-a-mile behind you ; think more kindly yet, if that be possible, of him who, tethered to a ton of granite, is struggling hard and making no way at all ; or who has even sat down and given up the struggle in dumb despair. You feel, I know, the weakness in yourself which would have made you break down if sorely tried like others. You know there is in your armor the unprotected place, at which a well-aimed or a random blow would have gone home and brought you down. Yes, you are nearing the winning-post, and you are among the first ; but six pounds more on your back, and you might have been nowhere. You feel, by your weak heart and weary frame, that if you had been sent to the Crimea in that dreadful first winter, you would certainly have died. And you feel, too, by your lack of moral stamina, by your feebleness of resolution, that it has been your preservation from you know not what depths of shame and misery, that you never were pressed very hard by temptation. Do not range yourself with those who found fault with a certain great and good Teacher of former days, because he went to be guest with a man that was a sinner. As if He could have gone to be guest with any man who was not !

There is no reckoning up the manifold *impedimenta* by which human beings are weighted for the race of life ; but all may be classified under the two heads of unfavorable influences arising out of the mental or physical nature of the human beings themselves, and unfavorable influences arising out of the circumstances in which the human beings are placed. You have known men who,

setting out from a very humble position, have attained to a respectable standing : but who would have reached a very much higher place but for their being weighted with a vulgar, violent, wrong-headed, and rude-spoken wife. You have known men of lowly origin, who had in them the makings of gentlemen ; but whom this single malign influence has condemned to coarse manners and a frowsy repulsive home for life. You have known many men whose powers are crippled and their nature soured by poverty ; by the heavy necessity for calculating how far each shilling will go ; by a certain sense of degradation that comes of sordid shifts. How can a poor parson write an eloquent or spirited sermon, when his mind all the while is running upon the thought how he is to pay the baker, or how he is to get shoes for his children ? It will be but a dull discourse which, under that weight, will be produced even by a man who, favorably placed, could have done very considerable things. It is only a great genius here and there who can do great things, who can do his best, no matter at what disadvantage he may be placed ; the great mass of ordinary men can make little headway with wind and tide dead against them. Not many trees would grow well if watered daily (let us say) with vitriol. Yet a tree which would speedily die under that nurture, might do very fairly, might even do magnificently, if it had fair play ; if it got its chance of common sunshine and shower. Some men, indeed, though always hampered by circumstances, have accomplished much ; but then you cannot help thinking how much more they might have accomplished had they been placed more happily. Pugin, the great Gothic architect, designed various noble buildings ; but I believe he complained that he never had fair play with his finest ; that he was always

weighted by considerations of expense, or by the nature of the ground he had to build on, or by the number of people it was essential the building should accommodate. And so he regarded his noblest edifices as no more than hints of what he could have done. He made grand running in the race; but oh what running he could have made if you had taken off those twelve additional pounds! I dare say you have known men who labored to make a pretty country-house on a site which had some one great drawback. They were always battling with that drawback, and trying to conquer it; but they never could quite succeed. And it remained a real worry and vexation. Their house was on the north side of a high hill, and never could have its due share of sunshine. Or you could not reach it but by climbing a very steep ascent; or you could not in any way get water into the landscape. When Sir Walter was at length able to call his own little estate on the banks of the Tweed he loved so well it was the ugliest, bleakest, and least interesting spot upon the course of that beautiful river; and the public road ran within a few yards of his door. The noble-hearted man made a charming dwelling at last; but he was fighting against nature in the matter of the landscape round it; and you can see yet, many a year after he left it, the poor little trees of his beloved plantations, contrasting with the magnificent timber of various grand old places above and below Abbotsford. There is something sadder in the sight of men who carried weight within themselves; and who, in aiming at usefulness or at happiness, were hampered and held back by their own nature. There are many men who are weighted with a hasty temper; weighted with a nervous, anxious constitution; weighted with an envious, jealous disposition; weighted with a

strong tendency to evil speaking, lying, and slandering; weighted with a grumbling, sour, discontented spirit; weighted with a disposition to vamping and boasting; weighted with a great want of common sense; weighted with an undue regard to what other people may be thinking or saying of them; weighted with many like things of which more will be said by and bye. When that good missionary, Henry Martyn, was in India, he was weighted with an irresistible drowsiness. He could hardly keep himself awake. And it must have been a burning earnestness that impelled him to ceaseless labor, in the presence of such a drag-weight as that. I am not thinking or saying, my friend, that it is wholly bad for us to carry weight; that great good may not come of the abatement of our power and spirit which may be made by that weight. I remember a greater missionary than even the sainted Martyn, to whom the Wisest and Kindest appointed that he should carry weight, and that he should fight at a sad disadvantage. And the greater missionary tells us that he knew why that weight was appointed him to carry; and that he felt he needed it all to save him from a strong tendency to undue self-conceit. No one knows, now, what the burden was which he bore; but it was heavy and painful; it was "a thorn in the flesh;" three times he earnestly asked that it might be taken away; but the answer he got implied that he needed it yet; and that his Master thought it a better plan to strengthen the back than to lighten the burden. Yes, the blessed Redeemer appointed that St. Paul should carry weight in life; and I think, friendly reader, that we shall believe that it is wisely and kindly meant, if the like should come to you and me.

We all understand what is meant when we hear it

is said that a man is doing very well, or has done very well, *considering*. I do not know whether it is a Scotchism to stop short at that point of the sentence. We do it, constantly, in this country: the sentence would be completed by saying, *considering the weight he has to carry*, or *the disadvantage at which he works*. And things which are *very good, considering*, may range very far up and down the scale of actual merit. A thing which is *very good, considering*, may be very bad, or may be tolerably good. It never can be absolutely very good; for if it were, you would cease to use the word *considering*. A thing which is absolutely very good, if it have been done under extremely unfavorable circumstances, would not be described as *very good, considering*; it would be described as *quite wonderful, considering*, or as *miraculous, considering*. And it is curious how people take a pride in accumulating unfavorable circumstances, that they may overcome them, and gain the glory of having overcome them. Thus, if a man wishes to sign his name, he might write the letters with his right hand; and though he write them very clearly and well and rapidly, nobody would think of giving him any credit. But if he write his name rather badly with his left hand, people would say it was a remarkable signature, *considering*. And if he wrote his name, very ill indeed, with his foot, people would say the writing was quite wonderful, *considering*. If a man desire to walk from one end of a long building, to the other, he might do so by walking along the floor; and though he did so steadily, swiftly, and gracefully, no one would remark that he had done anything worth notice. But if he choose for his path a thick rope, extended from one end of the building to the other, at a height of a hundred feet; and if he walk rather slowly and awkwardly along it, he will be esteemed

as having done something very extraordinary ; while if, in addition to this, he is blindfolded, and has his feet placed in large baskets instead of shoes, he will, if in any way he can get over the distance between the ends of the building, be held as one of the most remarkable men of the age. Yes, load yourself with weight which no one asks you to carry : accumulate disadvantages which you need not face unless you choose ; then carry the weight in any fashion, and overcome the disadvantages in any fashion ; and you are a great man, considering ; that is, considering the disadvantages and the weight. Let this be remembered : if a man is so placed that he cannot do his work, except in the face of special difficulties, then let him be praised if he vanquish these in some decent measure, and if he do his work tolerably well. But a man deserves no praise at all for work which he has done tolerably or done rather badly, because he chose to do it under disadvantageous circumstances, under which there was no earthly call upon him to do it. In this case he probably is a self-conceited man, or a man of wrong-headed independence of disposition ; and in this case, if his work be bad absolutely, don't tell him that it is good, considering. Refuse to consider. He has no right to expect that you should. There was a man who built a house entirely with his own hands. He had never learned either mason work or carpentry : he could quite well have afforded to pay skilled workmen to do the work he wanted ; but he did not choose to do so. He did the whole work himself. The house was finished : its aspect was peculiar. The walls were off the perpendicular considerably, and the windows were singular in shape, the doors fitted badly and the floors were far from level. In short, it was a very bad and awkward-looking house ; but it was a won-

derful house, considering. And people said that it was so, who saw nothing wonderful in the beautiful house next it, perfect in symmetry and finish and comfort, but built by men whose business it was to build. Now, I should have declined to admire that odd house, or to express the least sympathy with its builder. He chose to run with a needless hundredweight on his back: he chose to walk in baskets instead of in shoes. And if, in consequence of his own perversity, he did his work badly, I should have refused to recognize it as anything but bad work. It was quite different with Robinson Crusoe, who made his dwelling and his furniture for himself, because there was no one else to make them for him. I dare say his cave was anything but exactly square, and his chairs and tables were cumbrous enough; but they were wonderful, considering certain facts which he was quite entitled to expect us to consider. Southey's *Cottonian Library* was all quite right; and you would have said that the books were very nicely bound, considering; for Southey could not afford to pay the regular binder's charges; and it was better that his books should be done up in cotton of various hues by the members of his own family, than that they should remain not bound at all. You will think, too, of the poor old parson who wrote a book which he thought of great value, but which no publisher would bring out. He was determined that all his labor should not be lost to posterity. So he bought types and a printing-press, and printed his precious work, poor man; he and his man-servant did it all. It made a great many volumes; and the task took up many years. Then he bound the volumes with his own hands; and carrying them to London, he placed a copy of his work in each of the public libraries. I dare say he might have

saved himself his labor. How many of my readers could tell what was the title of the work, or what was the name of its author? Still, *there* was a man who accomplished his design, in the face of every disadvantage.

There is a great point of difference between our feeling towards the human being who runs his race much overweighted, and our feeling towards the inferior animal that does the like. If you saw a poor horse gamely struggling in a race, with a weight of a ton extra, you would pity it. Your sympathies would all be with the creature that was making the best of unfavorable circumstances. But it is a sorrowful fact, that the drag weight of human beings not unfrequently consists of things which make us angry rather than sympathetic. You have seen a man carrying heavy weight in life, perhaps in the form of inveterate wrongheadedness and suspiciousness; but instead of pitying him, our impulse would rather be to beat him upon that perverted head. We pity physical malformation or unhealthiness; but our bent is to be angry with intellectual and moral malformation or unhealthiness. We feel for the deformed man, who must struggle on at that sad disadvantage; feeling it, too, much more acutely than you would readily believe. But we have only indignation for the man weighted with far worse things; and things which, in some cases at least, he can just as little help. You have known men whose extra pounds, or even extra ton, was a hasty temper, flying out of a sudden into ungovernable bursts: or a moral cowardice leading to trickery and falsehood: or a special disposition to envy and evil speaking: or a very strong tendency to morbid complaining about his misfortunes and troubles: or an invincible bent to be always talking of

his sufferings through the derangement of his digestive organs. Now, you grow angry at these things. You cannot stand them. And there is a substratum of truth to that angry feeling. A man *can* form his mind more than he can form his body. If a man be well-made, physically, he will, in ordinary cases, remain so : but he may, in a moral sense, raise a great hunchback where nature made none. He may foster a malignant temper, a grumbling, fretful spirit, which by manful resistance might be much abated, if not quite put down. But still, there should often be pity, where we are prone only to blame. We find a person in whom a truly disgusting character has been formed : well, if you knew all, you would know that the person had hardly a chance of being otherwise : the man could not help it. You have known people who were awfully unamiable and repulsive : you may have been told how very different they once were, — sweet-tempered and cheerful. And surely the change is a far sadder one than that which has passed upon the wrinkled old woman, who was once (as you are told) the loveliest girl of her time. Yet many a one who will look with interest upon the withered face and the dimmed eyes, and try to trace in them the vestiges of radiant beauty gone, will never think of puzzling out in violent spurts of petulance the perversion of a quick and kind heart ; or in curious oddities and pettinesses the result of long and lonely years of toil in which no one sympathized ; or in cynical bitterness and misanthropy, an old disappointment never got over. There is a hard knot in the wood, where a green young branch was lopped away. I have a great pity for old bachelors. Those I have known have for the most part been old fools. But the more foolish and absurd they are, the more pity is due to

them. I believe there is something to be said for even the most unamiable creatures. The shark is an unamiable creature. It is voracious. It will snap a man in two. Yet it is not unworthy of sympathy. Its organization is such that it is always suffering the most ravenous hunger. You can hardly imagine the state of intolerable famine in which that unhappy animal roams the ocean. People talk of its awful teeth and its vindictive eye. I suppose it is well ascertained that the extremity of physical want, as reached on rafts at sea, has driven human beings to deeds as barbarous as ever shark was accused of. The worse a human being is, the more he deserves our pity. Hang him, if *that* be needful for the welfare of society; but pity him even as you hang. Many a poor creature has gradually become hardened and inveterate in guilt, who would have shuddered at first had the excess of it ultimately reached been at first presented to view. But the precipice was sloped off: the descent was made step by step. And there is many a human being who never had a chance of being good: many who have been trained, and even compelled, to evil from very infancy. Who that knows anything of our great cities, but knows how the poor little child, the toddling innocent, is sometimes sent out day by day to steal; and received in his wretched home with blows and curses if he fail to bring back enough: who has not heard of such poor little things, unsuccessful in their sorry work, sleeping all night in some wintry stair, because they durst not venture back to their drunken, miserable, desperate parents? I could tell things at which angels might shed tears, with much better reason for doing so than seems to me to exist in some of those more imposing occasions on which bombastic writers are wont to describe them as weeping. Ah,

there is One who knows where the responsibility for all this rests! Not wholly with the wretched parents: far from *that*. *They*, too, have gone through the like: they had as little chance as their children. *They* deserve our deepest pity too. Perhaps the deeper pity is not due to the shivering, starving child, with the bitter wind cutting through its thin rags, and its blue feet on the frozen pavement, holding out a hand that is like the claw of some beast, but rather to the brutalized mother who could thus send out the infant she bore. Surely the mother's condition, if we look at the case aright, is the more deplorable. Would not you, my reader, rather endure any degree of cold and hunger than come to this! Doubtless, there is blame somewhere that such things should be: but we all know that the blame of the most miserable practical evils and failures can hardly be traced to particular individuals. It is through the incapacity of scores of public servants that an army is starved. It is through the fault of millions of people that our great towns are what they are: and it must be confessed that the actual responsibility is spread so thinly over so great a surface, that it is hard to say it rests very blackly upon any one spot. Oh, that we could but know whom to hang, when we find some flagrant, crying evil! Unluckily, hasty people are ready to be content if they can but hang anybody, without minding much whether that individual be more to blame than many beside. Laws and kings have something to do here: but management and foresight on the part of the poorer classes have a great deal more to do. And no laws can make many persons managing or provident. I do not hesitate to say, from what I have myself seen of the poor, that the same short-sighted extravagance, the same recklessness of consequences, which are frequently

found in them, would cause quite as much misery if they prevailed in a like degree among people with a thousand a-year. But it seems as if only tolerably well-to-do people have the heart to be provident and self-denying. A man with a few hundreds annually does not marry unless he thinks he can afford it: but the workman with fifteen shillings a-week is profoundly indifferent to any such calculation. I firmly believe that the sternest of all self-denial is that practised by those who, when we divide mankind into rich and poor, must be classed (I suppose) with the rich. But I turn away from a miserable subject, through which I cannot see my way clearly, and on which I cannot think but with unutterable pain. It is an easy way of cutting the knot to declare that the rich are the cause of all the sufferings of the poor; but when we look at the case in all its bearings, we shall see that *that* is rank nonsense. And on the other hand, it is unquestionable that the rich are bound to do something. But what? I should feel deeply indebted to any one who would write out, in a few short and intelligible sentences, the practical results that are aimed at in the *Song of the Shirt*. The misery and evil are manifest: but tell us whom to hang; tell us what to do!

One heavy burden with which many men are weighted for the race of life, is depression of spirits. I wonder whether this used to be as common in former days as it is now. There was, indeed, the man in Homer, who walked by the sea-shore in a very gloomy mood; but his case seems to have been thought remarkable. What is it in our modern mode of life, and our infinity of cares; what little thing is it about the matter of the brain, or the flow of the blood, that makes the difference between buoy-

ant cheerfulness and deep depression? I begin to think that almost all educated people, and especially all whose work is mental rather than physical, suffer more or less from this indescribable gloom. And although a certain amount of sentimental sadness may possibly help the poet, or the imaginative writer, to produce material which may be very attractive to the young and inexperienced, I suppose it will be admitted by all that cheerfulness and hopefulness are noble and healthful stimulants to worthy effort, and that depression of spirits does (so to speak) cut the sinews with which the average man must do the work of life. You know how lightly the buoyant heart carries people through entanglements and labors under which the desponding would break down, or which they never would face. Yet, in thinking of the commonness of depressed spirits, even where the mind is otherwise very free from anything morbid, we should remember that there is a strong temptation to believe that this depression is more common and more prevalent than it truly is. Sometimes there is a gloom which overcasts all life, like that in which James Watt lived and worked, and served his race so nobly; like that from which the gentle, amiable poet, James Montgomery, suffered through his whole career. But in ordinary cases the gloom is temporary and transient. Even the most depressed are not always so. Like, we know, suggests like powerfully. If you are placed in some peculiar conjuncture of circumstances, or if you pass through some remarkable scene, the present scene or conjuncture will call up before you in a way that startles you, something like itself which you had long forgotten, and which you would never have remembered but for this touch of some mysterious spring. And accordingly, a man depressed in spirits thinks that

he is always so, or at least fancies that such depression has given the color to his life in a very much greater degree than it actually has done so. For this dark season wakens up the remembrance of many similar dark seasons which in more cheerful days are quite forgot, and these cheerful days drop out of memory for the time. Hearing such a man speak, if he speak out his heart to you, you think him inconsistent, perhaps you think him insincere. You think he is saying more than he truly feels. It is not so; he feels and believes it all at the time. But he is taking a one-sided view of things: he is undergoing the misery of it acutely for the time: by and bye he will see things from quite a different point. A very eminent man (there can be no harm in referring to a case which he himself made so public) wrote and published something about his *miserable home*. He was quite sincere, I do not doubt. He thought so at the time. He *was* miserable just then; and so, looking back on past years, he could see nothing but misery. But the case was not really so, one could feel sure. There had been a vast deal of enjoyment about his home and his lot; it was forgotten, then. A man in very low spirits, reading over his diary, somehow lights upon and dwells upon all the sad and wounding things; he involuntarily skips the rest, or reads them with but faint perception of their meaning. In reading the very Bible, he does the like thing. He chances upon that which is in unison with his present mood. I think there is no respect in which this great law of the association of ideas holds more strictly true, than in the power of a present state of mind, or a present state of outward circumstances, to bring up vividly before us all such states in our past history. We are depressed, we are worried; and when we look back, all

our departed days of worry and depression appear to start up and press themselves upon our view to the exclusion of anything else: so that we are ready to think that we have never been otherwise than depressed and worried all our life. But when more cheerful times come, they suggest only such times of cheerfulness, and no effort will bring back the depression vividly as when we felt it. It is not selfishness or heartlessness, it is the result of an inevitable law of mind, that people in happy circumstances should resolutely believe that it is a happy world after all; for looking back, and looking around, the mind refuses to take distinct note of anything that is not somewhat akin to its present state. And so, if any ordinary man, who is not a distempered genius or a great fool, tells you that he is always miserable, don't believe him. He feels so now, but he does not always feel so. There are periods of brightening in the darkest lot. Very, very few live in unvarying gloom. Not but what there is something very pitiful (by which I mean deserving of pity) in what may be termed the Micawber style of mind; in the stage of hysteric oscillations between joy and misery. Thoughtless readers of *David Copperfield* laugh at Mr. Micawber, and his rapid passages from the depth of despair to the summit of happiness, and back again. But if you have seen or experienced that morbid condition, you would know that there is more reason to mourn over it than to laugh at it. There is acute misery felt now and then; and there is a pervading, never-departing sense of the hollowness of the morbid mirth. It is but a very few degrees better than "moody madness, laughing wild, amid severest woe." By depression of spirits, I understand a dejection without any cause that could be stated, or from causes which in a

healthy mind would produce no such degree of dejection. No doubt many men can remember seasons of dejection which was not imaginary, and of anxiety and misery whose causes were only too real. You can remember, perhaps, the dark time in which you knew quite well what it was that made it so dark. Well, better days have come. That sorrowful, wearing time, which exhausted the springs of life faster than ordinary living would have done, which aged you in heart and frame before your day, dragged over, and it is gone. You carried heavy weight, indeed, while it lasted. It was but poor running you made, poor work you did, with that feeble, anxious, disappointed, miserable heart. And you would many a time have been thankful to creep into a quiet grave. Perhaps that season did you good. Perhaps it was the discipline you needed. Perhaps it took out your self-conceit, and made you humble. Perhaps it disposed you to feel for the grief and cares of others, and made you sympathetic. Perhaps, looking back now, you can discern the end it served. And now that it has done its work, and that it only stings you when you look back, let that time be quite forgotten !

There are men, and very clever men, who do the work of life at a disadvantage, through *this*, that their mind is a machine fitted for doing well only one kind of work ; or that their mind is a machine which, though doing many things well, does some one thing, perhaps a conspicuous thing, very poorly. You find it hard to give a man credit for being possessed of sense and talent, if you hear him make a speech at a public dinner, which speech approaches the idiotic for its silliness and confusion. And the vulgar mind readily concludes that he who does

one thing extremely ill, can do nothing well; and that he who is ignorant on one point, is ignorant on all. A friend of mine, a country parson, on first going to his parish, resolved to farm his glebe for himself. A neighboring farmer kindly offered the parson to plough one of his fields. The farmer said that he would send his man John with a plough and a pair of horses on a certain day. "If ye're goin' aboot," said the farmer to the clergyman, "John will be unco' weel pleased if you speak to him, and say it's a fine day, or the like o' that; but dinna," said the farmer, with much solemnity, "dinna say onything to him aboot ploughin' and sawin'; for John," he added, "is a stupid body, but he has been ploughin' and sawin' all his life, and he'll see in a minute that ye ken naething aboot ploughin' and sawin'. And then," said the sagacious old farmer, with extreme earnestness, "if he comes to think that ye ken naething aboot ploughin' and sawin', he'll think that ye ken naething aboot onything!" Yes, it is natural to us all to think that if the machine breaks down at that work in which we are competent to test it, then the machine cannot do any work at all.

If you have a strong current of water, you may turn it into any channel you please, and make it do any work you please. With equal energy and success it will flow north or south; it will turn a corn-mill, or a threshing-machine, or a grindstone. Many people live under a vague impression that the human mind is like that. They think — Here is so much ability, so much energy, which may be turned in any direction, and made to do any work; and they are surprised to find that the power, available and great for one kind of work, is worth nothing for another. A man very clever at one thing, is

positively weak and stupid at another thing. A very good judge may be a wretchedly bad joker ; and he must go through his career at this disadvantage, that people, finding him silly at the thing they are able to estimate, find it hard to believe that he is not silly at everything. I know for myself that it would not be right that the Premier should request me to look out for a suitable Chancellor. I am not competent to appreciate the depth of a man's knowledge of equity ; by which I do not mean justice, but chancery law. But though quite unable to understand how great a Chancellor Lord Eldon was, I am quite able to estimate how great a poet he was ; also how great a wit. Here is a poem by that eminent person. Doubtless he regarded it as a wonder of happy versification, as well as instinct with the most convulsing fun. It is intended to set out in a metrical form, the career of a certain judge, who went up as a poor lad from Scotland to England, but did well at the bar, and ultimately found his place upon the bench. Here is Lord Chancellor Eldon's humorous poem :

James Allan Parke  
Came naked stark,  
From Scotland:  
But he got clothes,  
Like other beaux,  
In England!

Now the fact that Lord Eldon wrote that poem, and valued it highly, would lead some folk to suppose that Lord Eldon was next door to an idiot. And a good many other things which that Chancellor did, such as his quotations from Scripture in the House of Commons, and his attempts to convince that assemblage (when Attorney-General) that Napoleon I. was the Apocalyptic

Beast or the Little Horn, certainly point towards the same conclusion. But the conclusion, as a general one, would be wrong. No doubt Lord Eldon was a wise and sagacious man as judge and statesman, though as wit and poet he was almost an idiot. So with other great men. It is easy to remember occasions on which great men have done very foolish things. There never was a truer hero nor a greater commander than Lord Nelson; but in some things he was merely an awkward, overgrown midshipman. But, then, let us remember, that a locomotive engine, though excellent at running, would be a poor hand at flying. *That* is not its vocation. The engine will draw fifteen heavy carriages fifty miles in an hour; and *that* remains as a noble feat, even though it be ascertained that the engine could not jump over a brook which would be cleared easily by the veriest screw. We all see this. But many of us have a confused idea that a great and clever man is (so to speak) a locomotive that can fly; and when it is proved that he cannot fly, then we begin to doubt whether he can even run. We think he should be good at everything, whether in his own line or not. And he is set at a disadvantage, particularly in the judgment of vulgar and stupid people, when it is clearly ascertained that at some things he is very inferior. I have heard of a very eminent preacher who sunk considerably (even as regards his preaching) in the estimation of a certain family, because it appeared that he played very badly at bowls. And we all know that occasionally the Premier already mentioned reverses the vulgar error, and in appointing men to great places, is guided by an axiom which amounts to just this: this locomotive can run well, therefore it will fly well. This man has filled a certain position well, therefore let us appoint

him to a position entirely different ; no doubt he will do well there too. Here is a clergyman who has edited certain Greek plays admirably : let us make him a bishop.

It may be remarked here, that the men who have attained the greatest success in the race of life, have generally carried weight. *Nitor in adversum* might be the motto of many a man, besides Burke. It seems to be almost a general rule, that the raw material out of which the finest fabrics are made, should look very little like these, to start with. It was a stammerer, of uncommanding mien, who became the greatest orator of graceful Greece. I believe it is admitted that Chalmers was the most effective preacher, perhaps the most telling speaker, that Britain has seen for at least a century ; yet his aspect was not dignified, his gestures were awkward, his voice was bad, and his accent frightful. He talked of an *oppning* when he meant an *opening* ; and he read out the text of one of his noblest sermons, " He that is fulthy, let him be fulthy stull." Yet who ever thought of these things, after hearing the good man for ten minutes ! Aye, load Eclipse with what extra pounds you might, Eclipse would always be first ! And, to descend to the race-horse, *he* had four white legs, white to the knees ; and he ran more awkwardly than racer ever did, with his head between his forelegs, close to the ground, like a pig. Alexander, Napoleon, and Wellington, were all little men ; in places where a commanding presence would have been of no small value. A most disagreeably affected manner has not prevented a barrister, with no special advantages, from rising with general approval to the highest places which a barrister can fill. A hideous little wretch has appeared for trial in a Criminal

Court, having succeeded in marrying seven wives at once. A painful hesitation has not hindered a certain eminent person from being one of the principal speakers in the British Parliament, for many years. Yes, even disadvantages never overcome have not sufficed to hold in obscurity men who were at once able and fortunate. But sometimes the disadvantage was thoroughly overcome. Sometimes it served no other end than to draw to one point the attention and the efforts of a determined will; and that matter, in regard to which nature seemed to have said that a man should fall short, became the thing in which he attained unrivalled perfection.

A heavy drag-weight upon the powers of some men, is the uncertainty of their powers. The man has not his powers at command. His mind is a capricious thing, that works when it pleases, and will not work except when it pleases. I am not thinking now of what to many is a sad disadvantage; that nervous trepidation which cannot be reasoned away, and which often deprives them of the full use of their mental abilities just when they are most needed. It is a vast thing in a man's favor that, whatever he can do, he should be able to do at any time, and to do at once. For want of coolness of mind, and that readiness which generally goes with it, many a man cannot do himself justice; and in a deliberative assembly he may be entirely beaten by some flip-pant person who has all his money (so to speak) in his pocket, while the other must send to the bank for his. How many people can think next day, or even a few minutes after, of the precise thing they ought to have said, but which would not come at the time! But very frequently the thing is of no value, unless it come at the

time when it is wanted. Coming next day, it is like the offer of a thick fur great-coat on a sweltering day in July. You look at the wrap, and say, Oh if I could but have had you on the December night when I went to London by the limited mail, and was nearly starved to death! But it seems as if the mind must be, to a certain extent, capricious in its action. Caprice, or what looks like it, appears of necessity to go with complicated machinery, even material. The more complicated a machine is, the liker it grows to mind, in the matter of uncertainty and apparent caprice of action. The simplest machine — say a pipe for conveying water — will always act in precisely the same way. And two such pipes, if of the same dimensions, and subjected to the same pressure, will always convey the self-same quantities. But go to more advanced machines. Take two clocks, or two locomotive engines; and though these are made in all respects exactly alike, they will act (I can answer at least for the locomotive engines) quite differently. One locomotive will swallow a vast quantity of water at once; another must be fed by dribblets; no one can say why. One engine is a *fac-simile* of the other; yet each has its character and its peculiarities, as truly as a man has. You need to know your engine's temper before driving it, just as much as you need to know that of your horse, or that of your friend. I know, of course, there is a mechanical reason for this seeming caprice, if you could trace the reason. But not one man in a thousand could trace out the reason. And the phenomenon, as it presses itself upon us, really amounts to this: that very complicated machinery appears to have a will of its own; appears to exercise something of the nature of choice. But there is no machine so capricious as the human mind.

The great poet who wrote those beautiful verses, could not do *that* every day. A good deal more of what he writes is poor enough; and many days he could not write at all. By long habit the mind may be made capable of being put in harness daily for the humbler task of producing prose; but you cannot say, when you harness it in the morning, how far or at what rate it will run that day.

Go and see a great organ, of which you have been told. Touch it, and you hear the noble tones at once. The organ can produce them at any time. But go and see a great man; touch *him*; that is, get him to begin to talk. You will be much disappointed if you expect, certainly, to hear anything like his book or his poem. A great man is not a man who is always saying great things; or who is always able to say great things. He is a man who on a few occasions has said great things; who on the coming of a sufficient occasion may possibly say great things again; but the staple of his talk is commonplace enough. Here is a point of difference from machinery, with all machinery's apparent caprice. You could not say, as you pointed to a steam-engine, The usual power of that engine is two hundred horses; but once or twice it has surprised us all by working up to two thousand. No; the engine is always of nearly the power of two thousand horses, if it ever is. But what we have been supposing as to the engine, is just what many men have done. Poe wrote *The Raven*; he was working then up to two thousand horse power. But he wrote abundance of poor stuff, working at about twenty-five. Read straight through the volumes of Wordsworth: and I think you will find traces of the engine having worked at many different powers, vary-

ing from twenty-five horses or less, up to two thousand or more. Go and hear a really great preacher when he is preaching in his own church upon a common Sunday; and possibly you may hear a very ordinary sermon. I have heard Mr. Melvill preach very poorly. You must not expect to find people always at their best. It is a very unusual thing that even the ablest men should be like Burke, who could not talk with an intelligent stranger for five minutes, without convincing the stranger that he had talked for five minutes with a great man. And it is an awful thing when some clever youth is introduced to some local poet who has been told how greatly the clever youth admires him; and what vast expectations the clever youth has formed of his conversation; and when the local celebrity makes a desperate effort to talk up to the expectations formed of him. I have witnessed such a scene; and I can sincerely say that I could not previously have believed that the local celebrity could have made such a fool of himself. He was resolved to show that he deserved his fame; and to show that the mind which had produced those lovely verses in the country newspaper, could not stoop to commonplace things.

Undue sensitiveness, and a too lowly estimate of their own powers, hang heavily upon some men; probably upon more men than one would imagine. I believe that many a man whom you would take to be ambitious, pushing, and self-complacent, is ever pressed with a sad conviction of inferiority, and wishes nothing more than quietly to slip through life. It would please and satisfy him if he could but be assured that he is just like other people. You may remember a touch of nature

(that is, of some people's nature) in Burns; you remember the simple exultation of the peasant mother when her daughter gets a sweetheart: she is "well pleased to see *her* bairn respeckit *like the lave*," that is, like the other girls round. And undue humility, perhaps even befitting humility, holds back sadly in the race of life. It is recorded that a weaver in a certain village in Scotland, was wont daily to offer a singular petition; he prayed daily and fervently for a better opinion of himself. Yes, a firm conviction of one's own importance is a great help in life. It gives dignity of bearing; it does (so to speak) lift the horse over many a fence at which one with a less confident heart would have broken down. But the man who estimates himself and his place humbly and justly, will be ready to shrink aside, and let men of greater impudence and not greater desert step before him. I have often seen, with a sad heart, in the case of working people, that manner, difficult to describe, which comes of being what we in Scotland sometimes call *sair hadden down*. I have seen the like in educated people too. And not very many will take the trouble to seek out and to draw out the modest merit that keeps itself in the shade. The energetic, successful people of this world are too busy in pushing each for himself, to have time to do *that*. You will find that people with abundant confidence, people who assume a good deal, are not unfrequently taken at their own estimate of themselves. I have seen a Queen's Counsel walk into court, after the case in which he was engaged had been conducted so far by his junior, and conducted as well as mortal could conduct it. But it was easy to see that the complacent air of superior strength with which the Queen's Counsel took the man-

agement out of his junior's hands, conveyed to the jury (a common jury) the belief that things were now to be managed in quite different and vastly better style. And have you not known such a thing as that a family, not a whit better, wealthier, or more respectable than all the rest in the little country town or the country parish, do yet, by carrying their heads higher (no mortal could say why), gradually elbow themselves into a place of admitted social superiority? Everybody knows exactly what they are, and from what they have sprung; but somehow, by resolute assumption, by a quiet air of being better than their neighbors, they draw ahead of them, and attain the glorious advantage of one step higher on the delicately graduated social ladder of the district. Now it is manifest that if such people had sense to see their true position, and the absurdity of their pretensions, they would assuredly not have gained that advantage, whatever it may be worth.

But sense and feeling are sometimes burdens in the race of life; that is, they sometimes hold a man back from grasping material advantages which he might have grasped had he not been prevented by the possession of a certain measure of common sense and right feeling. I doubt not, my friend, that you have acquaintances who can do things which you could not do for your life, and who by doing these things, push their way in life. They ask for what they want, and never let a chance go by them. And though they may meet many rebuffs, they sometimes make a successful venture. Impudence sometimes attains to a pitch of sublimity; and at that point it has produced a very great impression upon many men. The incapable person who started for a professorship, has sometimes got it. The man who, amid the derision of

the county, published his address to the electors, has occasionally got into the House of Commons. The vulgar, half-educated preacher, who without any introduction asked a patron for a vacant living in the Church, has now and then got the living. And however unfit you may be for a place, and however discreditable may have been the means by which you got it, once you have actually held it for two or three years, people come to acquiesce in your holding it. They accept the fact that you are there, just as we accept the fact that any other evil exists in this world, without asking why, except on very special occasions. I believe too, that in the matter of worldly preferment, there is too much fatalism in many good men. They have a vague trust that Providence will do more than it has promised. They are ready to think that if it is God's will that they are to gain such a prize, it will be sure to come their way without their pushing. That is a mistake. Suppose you apply the same reasoning to your dinner. Suppose you sit still in your study and say, "If I am to have dinner to-day, it will come without effort of mine; and if I am not to have dinner to-day, it will not come by any effort of mine; so here I sit still and do nothing." Is not *that* absurd? Yet that is what many a wise and good man practically says about the place in life which would suit him, and which would make him happy. Not Turks and Hindoos alone have a tendency to believe in their *Kismet*. It is human to believe in that. And we grasp at every event that seems to favor the belief. The other evening, in the twilight, I passed two respectable-looking women, who seemed like domestic servants; and I caught one sentence which one said to the other with great apparent faith. "You see," she said, "if a thing's to come your

way, it'll no gang by ye!" It was in a crowded street but if it had been in my country parish where every one knew me, I should certainly have stopped the women, and told them that though what they said was quite true, I feared they were understanding it wrongly; and that the firm belief we all hold in God's Providence which reaches to all events, and in His sovereignty which orders all things, should be used to help us to be resigned, after we have done our best and failed; but should never be used as an excuse for not doing our best. When we have set our mind on any honest end, let us seek to compass it by every honest means; and if we fail after having used every honest means, *then* let us fall back on the comfortable belief that things are ordered by the Wisest and Kindest; *then* is the time for the *Fiat Voluntas Tua*.

You would not wish, my friend, to be deprived of common sense and of delicate feeling, even though you could be quite sure that once *that* drag-weight was taken off, you would spring forward to the van, and make such running in the race of life as you never made before. Still you cannot help looking with a certain interest upon those people who, by the want of these hindering influences, are enabled to do things and say things which you never could. I have sometimes looked with no small curiosity upon the kind of man who will come uninvited, and without warning of his approach, to stay at another man's house: who will stay on, quite comfortable and unmoved, though seeing plainly he is not wanted: who will announce, on arriving, that his visit is to be for three days, and who will then, without further remark, and without invitation of any kind, remain for a month or six weeks: and all the while sit down to dinner every day with a perfectly easy and unembarrassed manner. You

and I, my reader, would rather live on much less than sixpence a day than do all this. We *could not* do it. But some people not merely can do it, but can do it without any appearance of effort. Oh, if the people who are victimized by these horse-leeches of society could but gain a little of the thickness of skin which characterizes the horse-leeches, and bid them be off, and not return again till they are invited! To the same pachydermatous class belong those individuals who will put all sorts of questions as to the private affairs of other people, but carefully shy off from any similar confidence as to their own affairs: also those individuals who borrow small sums of money and never repay them, but go on borrowing till the small sums amount to a good deal. To the same class may be referred the persons who lay themselves out for saying disagreeable things: the "candid friends" of Canning: the "people who speak their mind," who form such pests of society. To find fault is to right-feeling men a very painful thing; but some take to the work with avidity and delight. And while people of cultivation shrink, with a delicate intuition, from saying anything which may give pain or cause uneasiness to others, there are others who are ever painfully treading upon the moral corns of all around them. Sometimes this is done designedly: as by Mr. Snarling, who by long practice has attained the power of hinting and insinuating, in the course of a forenoon call, as many unpleasant things as may germinate into a crop of ill-tempers and worries which shall make the house at which he called uncomfortable all that day. Sometimes it is done unawares, as by Mr. Boor, who, through pure ignorance and coarseness, is always bellowing out things which it is disagreeable to some one, or to several, to hear. Which was it,

I wonder, Boor or Snarling, who once reached the dignity of the mitre; and who, at prayers in his house, uttered this supplication on behalf of a lady visitor who was kneeling beside him: "Bless our friend, Mrs. — : give her a little more common sense; and teach her to dress a little less like a tragedy queen than she does at present?"

But who shall reckon up the countless circumstances which lie like a depressing burden on the energies of men, and make them work at that disadvantage which we have thought of under the figure of *carrying weight in life*? There are men who carry weight in a damp, marshy neighborhood, who, amid bracing mountain air, might have done things which now they will never do. There are men who carry weight in an uncomfortable house: in smoky chimneys: in a study with a dismal look-out: in distance from a railway-station: in ten miles between them and a bookseller's shop. Give another hundred a year of income, and the poor, struggling parson who preaches dull sermons will astonish you by the talent he will exhibit when his mind is freed from the dismal depressing influence of ceaseless scheming to keep the wolf from the door. Let the poor little sick child grow strong and well, and with how much better heart will its father face the work of life! Let the clergyman who preached in a spiritless enough way, to a handful of uneducated rustics, be placed in a charge where weekly he has to address a large cultivated congregation; and with the new stimulus, latent powers may manifest themselves which no one fancied he possessed, and he may prove quite an eloquent and attractive preacher. A dull, quiet man, whom you esteemed as a blockhead, may suddenly be valued very differently when circum-

stances unexpectedly call out the solid qualities he possesses, unsuspected before. A man, devoid of brilliancy, may on occasion show that he possesses great good sense; or that he has the power of sticking to his task, in spite of discouragement. Let a man be placed where dogged perseverance will stand him in stead, and you may see what he can do when he has but a chance. The especial weight which has held some men back — the thing which kept them from doing great things and attaining great fame — has been just this: that they were not able to say or to write what they have thought and felt. And indeed a great poet is nothing more than the one man in a million who has the gift to express that which has been in the mind and heart of multitudes. If even the most commonplace of human beings could write all the poetry he has felt, he would produce something that would go straight to the hearts of many.

It is touching to witness the indications and vestiges of sweet and admirable things which have been subjected to a weight which has entirely crushed them down: things which would have come out into beauty and excellence if they had been allowed a chance. You may witness one of the saddest of all the losses of nature in various old maids. What kind hearts are there running to waste! What pure and gentle affections blossom to be blighted! I dare say you have heard a young lady of more than forty sing; and you have seen her eyes fill with tears at the pathos of a very commonplace verse. Have you not thought that there was the indication of a tender heart which might have made some good man happy; and, in doing so, made herself happy too? But it was not to be. Still, it is sad to think that sometimes upon cats  
' does there should be wasted the affection of a kindly

human being ! And you know, too, how often the fairest promise of human excellence is never suffered to come to fruit. You must look upon gravestones to find the names of those who promised to be the best and noblest specimens of the race. They died in early youth ; perhaps in early childhood. Their pleasant faces, their singular words and ways, remain, not often talked of, in the memories of subdued parents, or of brothers and sisters now grown old, but never forgetting how *that* one of the family that was as the flower of the flock was the first to fade. It has been a proverbial saying, you know, even from heathen ages, that those whom the gods love die young. It is but an inferior order of human beings that makes the living succession to carry on the human race.



## CHAPTER VII.

### COLLEGE LIFE AT GLASGOW.

**I**N the last days of October, just when winter is fairly settling down upon smoky and noisy Glasgow ; when every leaf has gone (for the leaves go early) from the trees near it, and when fogs shorten the day at its beginning and its end ; there begins to appear, intermingled with the crowd in the Trongate, and staring in at the shop-windows of Buchanan-street with a curiosity fresh from the country, a host of lads, varying in age from decided boyhood to decided manhood, conspicuous by the scarlet mantle they wear. Those glaring robes have not been seen before since May-day — for the vacation at Glasgow College lasts from the first of May to about the twenty-sixth of October : — and now their appearance announces to the citizens that winter has decidedly set in ; the season, in Glasgow, of ceaseless rain, fog, and smoke ; of eager business, splendid hospitality, and laborious study. Through the close stifling *wynds* or alleys of the High-street the word runs, that “ The Colley dougs have come back again ; ” and by the time that November is a few days old, the college courts, which through the summer months lay still and deserted, are thronged with a motley crowd of many hundreds of young men, students of arts, theology, medicine, and law.

The stranger in Glasgow who has paid a visit to the noble cathedral, has probably, in returning from it, walked down the High-street, a steep and filthy way of tall houses, now abandoned to the poorest classes of the community, where dirty women in *mutches*, each followed by two or three squalid children, hold loud conversations all day long; and the alleys leading from which pour forth a flood of poverty, disease, and crime. On the left hand of the High-street, where it becomes a shade more respectable, a dark, low-browed building, of three stories in height, fronts the street for two or three hundred yards. *That* is Glasgow College, or the University of Glasgow; for here, as also at Edinburgh, the University consists of a single College. The first gate-way at which we arrive opens into a dull-looking court, inhabited by the professors, eight or ten of whom have houses here. Further down, a low archway, which is the main entrance to the building, admits to two or three quadrangles, occupied by the various class-rooms. There is something impressive in the sudden transition from one of the most crowded and noisy streets of the city, to the calm and stillness of the College courts. The first court we enter is a small one, surrounded by buildings of a dark and venerable aspect. An antique staircase of massive stone leads to the Faculty Hall, or Senate-house; and a spire of considerable height surmounts a vaulted archway leading to the second court. This court is much larger than the one next the street, and with its turrets and winding staircases, narrow windows and high-pitched roofs, would quite come up to our ideas of academic architecture; but unhappily, some years since one side of this venerable quadrangle was pulled down, and a large building in the Grecian style erected

]

in its place, which, like a pert interloper, contrasts most disagreeably with the remainder of the old monastic pile. Passing out of this court by another vaulted passage, we enter an open square, to the right of which is the University library, and at some little distance an elegant Doric temple, which is greatly admired by those who prefer Grecian to Gothic architecture. This is the Hunterian Museum, and contains a valuable collection of subjects in natural history and anatomy, bequeathed by the eminent surgeon whose name it bears. Beyond this building, the College gardens stretch away to a considerable distance. The ground is undulating — there are many trees, and what was once a pleasant country stream flows through the gardens; but Glasgow factories and Glasgow smoke have quite spoiled what must once have been a delightful retreat from the dust and glare of the city. The trees are now quite blackened, the stream (named the Molendinar Burn) became so offensive that it was found necessary to arch it over, and drifts of stifling and noisome smoke trail slowly all day over the College gardens. There are no evergreens nor flowers; and the students generally prefer to take their “constitutional” in the purer air of the western outskirts of Glasgow.

Let us suppose that the young student, brought from the country by parent or guardian, has come to town to enter upon his university career. The order in which the classes are taken is as follows: first year, Latin and Greek; second, Logic and Greek; third, Moral Philosophy and Mathematics; fourth, Natural Philosophy. The classes must be attended in this order by those students who intend taking their degree, or going into the church; but any person may attend any class upon signing a dec-

aration to the effect that he is not studying for the church. Practically, the classes are almost invariably attended in the order which has been mentioned, which is called the College *curriculum*. For several days before the classes open, the professors remain in their houses, that students may call upon them to enter their class. Our young friend and his governor call upon the professor whose class is to be entered. They find him seated in his study, a low-roofed chamber of small dimensions, but abundantly provided with the comforts which beseeem a sedentary and studious life. There is the writing-table at which to sit; by the window, the desk at which to write or read while standing; there is the cool seat of polished birch, without a trace of cushion; and the vast easy-chair, where horse-hair and morocco have done their utmost, to receive the weary man of learning in the day's last luxurious hour of leisure. The professor is seated at his table, fresh and hearty from his six months' holiday, brown from his shooting-box in the Highlands, or his ramble over the Continent, or his pretty villa on the beautiful Frith of Clyde. Three or four lads who have come to enter the class, fidget uneasily on their chairs, with awe-struck faces. The professor may perhaps, for his own guidance, make some inquiry as to the previous acquirements of the student, but there is no preliminary test applied to ascertain the student's fitness for entering college. The ceremony of entering the class is completed by paying the professor his fee, which in almost every class is three guineas. In return, the professor gives the student a ticket of admission to the class-room; on which, at the end of the session, he writes a certificate of the student's having attended his class. The more civilized students take care to have the exact amount of the fee

prepared beforehand, which they place on the professor's table, and which he receives without remark, thus softening the mercantile transaction as much as may be. Others hand their money to the professor, and demand the change in regular shop fashion. It is amusing to remark the demeanour of the different professors in taking their three guineas. Some are dignifiedly unconscious of the sum received, and although a sharp glance may ascertain that the amount is there, no remark is made. Others take up the money, count it over, and pocket it with a bow, saying, "Thank you, Sir; much obliged to you, Sir."

And what a strange mixed company the thirteen or fourteen hundred students of Glasgow College make up! Boys of eleven or twelve years old (Thomas Campbell entered at the latter age); men with gray hair, up to the age of fifty or sixty; great stout fellows from the plough; men in considerable number from the north of Ireland; lads from counting-houses in town, who wish to improve their minds by a session at the logic class; English dissenters, long excluded from the Universities of England, who have come down to the enlightened country where a Turk or a Buddhist may graduate if he will; young men with high scholarship from the best public schools; and others not knowing a letter of Greek and hardly a word of Latin. Mr. Lockhart (formerly editor of the *Quarterly Review*), says with truth that "the greater part of the students attending the Scotch colleges, consists of persons whose situation in life, had they been born in England, must have left them no chance of being able to share the advantages of an academical education." "Any young man who can afford to wear a decent coat, and live in a garret upon porridge or herrings, may, if he

pleases, come to Edinburgh, and pass through his academical career just as creditably as is required or expected." And, in consequence of all this, "the Universities of Scotland educate, in proportion to the size and wealth of the two countries, twenty times a larger number than those of England educate."<sup>1</sup>

Let us imagine our student now fairly entered upon his work. In company with three or four hundred of the newest and brightest gowns, he has, no doubt, attended the ceremony of opening the session in the Common Hall, and listened to many good advices from the Principal, who used regularly to beg his youthful auditors to remember they were "no longer schoolboys;" a request invariably received with loud applause. The bustle of the first start over, the student has fallen into the regular order of his work. The Latin and Greek classes he finds are very much like classes at school, the main difference being that they are attended by larger numbers, and accordingly that each student is but rarely called on for examination. When a student is "called," he construes five or six lines; the professor then puts a number of questions upon what has been read. Should he fail to answer any question, the professor asks if any one in the same bench can answer it. If no one can, he next names the numbers of the various benches one after another, and the students in each have then an opportunity of making their knowledge and application apparent to their fellow-students; by whom, at the end of the session, the class prizes are voted. Lockhart says with justice of the Scotch professors of Latin and Greek, that

"The nature of the duties they perform of course reduces them to something quite different from what we (in England) should under-

<sup>1</sup> *Peter's Letters to his Kinsfolk.* Vol. i. pp. 187, 192, 198.

stand by the name they bear. They are not employed in assisting young men to study, with greater facility or advantage, the poets, the historians, or the philosophers of antiquity; nay, it can scarcely be said, in any proper meaning of the term, that they are employed in teaching the principles of language. They are schoolmasters in the strictest sense of the word; for their time is spent in laying the very lowest part of the foundation on which a superstructure of learning must be reared. A profound and accomplished scholar may at times be found discharging these duties; but most assuredly there is no need either of depth or elegance to enable him to discharge them as well as the occasion requires."

The reiterated complaints of Professor Blackie, of the Greek Chair at Edinburgh, prove what indeed needs no proof to any one acquainted with the Universities of Scotland, that no improvement has taken place in the years since Lockhart thus wrote. Greek professors are still expected to begin with the alphabet. The truth is, that while things remain as at present, a good, energetic teacher from a public school would make a better Latin or Greek professor than a man of fine scholarship. Fancy Mr. Blackie patiently listening to a dunce blundering through  $\delta \eta \tau \omega$ ! Or think of assigning the task of grounding a ploughman in the inflections of  $\tau \upsilon \tau \tau \omega$ , to the gentle and refined Mr. Lushington of Glasgow! We do not think that Mr. Tennyson was sketching the characteristics of the right man for such work when he wrote of Lushington thus:—

And thou art worthy; full of power;  
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,  
Consistent; wearing all that weight  
Of learning lightly like a flower.

s. It is the old story of "cutting blocks with a razor;" you're like setting the winner of the Derby to pull a dray. live & so long as the work remains what it is, we believe

it would be better and more cheerfully done by machinery a good deal more rough and ready.

The students attending the Latin class may number about 250 ; but the class is taught in two separate divisions. The Greek class (which meets in three divisions) has about 300 students ; when Sir Daniel Sandford was professor, it sometimes numbered 500. The Logic class has from 150 to 180 students, the Moral Philosophy, 100 to 120 ; the Natural Philosophy, 70 to 90.

It is a curious thing to witness the beginning of a working day at Glasgow College. We must, to do so, rise at six A. M. in a dark winter morning ; for if we live in the better part of the town, we have a walk of half-an-hour to get over before the classes meet. Through darkness and sleet we make our way to the College, which we reach, say at twenty minutes past seven A. M. A crowd of students, old and young, wrapped in the red mantles, shivering and sleepy, is pouring in at the low archway already mentioned. The lights shining through the little windows point out the class-rooms which are now to be occupied. At the door of each stands an unshaven servant, in whose vicinity a fragrance as of whisky pervades the air. The servants in former days were always shabby and generally dirty ; not unfrequently drunk. They wear no livery of any kind. By long intercourse with many generations of students, they have acquired the power of receiving and returning any amount of "chaff." At length a miserable tinkling is heard from the steeple ; the students pour into the class-rooms, and arrange themselves in benches, like the pews of a church. A low pulpit is occupied by the professor. The business of the day is commenced by a short prayer. After prayer, a student, placed in a subsidiary pulpit,

calls over the names of the students, who severally signify their presence by saying *Adsum*. The work of the class then goes on till the hour is finished. An hour is the invariable period for which the class remains. The Latin and Greek classes meet at the early hour we have mentioned; and, strange to say, it is at this unseasonable time that the eloquent Professor of Moral Philosophy lectures. It is a remarkable proof of his power, that he is able to touch and excite such a wretchedly cold and sleepy auditory. The applause which generally attends his lectures, makes the houses nearest his class-room the least desirable in the professor's court. At half-past eight many of the classes are in operation — as the Latin, Greek, Logic, Natural Philosophy, and Theology. Though it is always an effort to be at College at hours so early, still the arrangement soon comes to be liked by both professors and students. By half-past nine the hardest of the day's work is over; and thus these early morning hours, which otherwise would probably be turned to little account, save the more valuable hours of the morning and afternoon.

Each of the Philosophy Classes meets two hours a day. The morning hour is occupied by a lecture; and an hour later in the day is given to the examination of the students on the lectures they have heard, and to hearing them read essays on the subjects under consideration. Thus Scotch students have the pen in their hand from the very commencement of their course; and the same system is kept up to the close of even the long course of eight years for the church. A very large proportion of young men thus acquire no inconsiderable command of that noble instrument, the English language; which is very seldom written with ease and accuracy,

except as the result of long-continued practice. The lectures read are *verbatim* the same, session after session, so that a Scotch Professor of Philosophy, with his two hours a day of work, and his six months' holiday in the pleasantest part of the year, has (once his course of lectures is written) a very comfortable place of it.

The present Professor of Latin (or *Humanity*, as it is called) is Mr. Ramsay, a graduate of Cambridge, and the author of the work on "Roman Antiquities" in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*. Mr. Lushington is the Professor of Greek, having succeeded Sir Daniel Sandford in 1838. He was the first Grecian of his time at Cambridge. The Chair of Logic has been filled by Mr. Buchanan for many years. There is no more admirable teacher in the University. Many a young man has dated his intellectual birth to the period of his attendance on the Logic class at Glasgow. Mr. Buchanan is a clergyman of the Scotch church, but resigned his parish on his appointment to the chair. Dr. Fleming is the Professor of Moral Philosophy: he, too, was a parish clergyman before his appointment. He is a man of vast information in every department of metaphysical philosophy, and is, perhaps, not surpassed in a somewhat tawdry eloquence by any man in Scotland. He is a heavy-looking man when in repose, but when animated, brightens up wonderfully. The intensity with which he himself feels, gives him a great power in moving the feelings of his hearers. Mr. Thomson, a few years since second Wrangler and first Smith's Prizeman, is the Professor of Natural Philosophy. He took a leading part in the laying of the Atlantic Telegraph Cable.

At the end of three years, students may take the degree of Bachelor of Arts, on passing an examination in

Classics, Logic, and Moral Philosophy. At the end of four years, on passing a further examination in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, they may take their Master's degree. Few students comparatively graduate. It is not necessary in order to enter the church; and not many young men are willing to undertake no inconsiderable amount of study to attain an honor which, in Scotland, brings with it no advantage whatever. And even the small fee, of from three to five guineas, which is paid at graduation, is a serious consideration to most Scotch students. A university education in Scotland, comes far down in the social scale; and while at the universities of England the great majority of the young men are the sons of gentlemen, in Scotland the vast preponderance consists of sons of farmers, tradesmen, and working men; and of poor lads, without relations or friends, struggling on amid unheard-of difficulties and privations. No one can look round the benches of any class-room in Scotland, without being struck by the harsh features and coarse attire of most of the young men; no one can converse with nine out of ten of them, without being struck by their vulgar accent and manner. A writer in the *Quarterly Review* perhaps speaks somewhat severely when he alludes to "those tag-rag and bob-tail concerns, the Scotch Universities:" but there is truth in Lockhart's remark, that —

A person whose eyes had been accustomed only to such places as the schools of Oxford, would certainly be very much struck with the *prima facie* mean condition of the majority of the students assembled at the prælections of these Edinburgh [and Glasgow] professors. Here and there one sees some small scattered remnant of the great flock of dandies, trying to keep each other in countenance, in a corner of the class-room; but these only heighten, by the contrast of their presence, the general effect of the slovenly and dirty mass which on every side surrounds them with its contaminating atmosphere.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Peter's Letters*. Vol. i. p. 187.

Yet ability is given by nature with little regard to social position: many of those rough specimens of humanity possess no ordinary talent; many will take on polish wonderfully, before they pass from college to life: and there is really a deep pathos in the story of toil, privation, and resolution, which is the story of many a Glasgow student's college days.

There are, of course, young men of good families at Glasgow College. There are students who wear all-round collars of extreme stiffness, who walk down to their classes from the aristocratic districts of Blythswood-square and Woodside-terrace; who are in much request at evening parties, and who strut in the afternoon in the Sauchyhall-road, the fashionable promenade of Glasgow. But most of the students live in very plain lodgings, in various parts of the town, and know no more of Glasgow society than if they were living in the Sandwich Islands. There are some streets near the College, consisting of tall houses divided into *flats*, in which great numbers of students dwell. The life of almost all is one of struggle and self-denial. It touches us, and that deeply, to think of poor lads of eighteen or nineteen, toiling on with their studies, with many a thought as to how they are to get food and raiment; with all those cares upon their heads which are heavy enough, God knows, when they press upon maturer years, yet supported by the hope that at some time in the distant future they may get into the church at last, or even into a parish school. What a princely dwelling must a country manse seem to such; what an inexhaustible revenue a living of three or four hundred a year! We have been told that many students have managed to live upon fifteen or twenty pounds a year. After writing this, we were almost startled on re-

curing to it ; but Mr. Lockhart, a Glasgow student himself, and the son of a Glasgow minister, confirms us : " I am assured," he says, " that the great majority of students here have seldom more than thirty or forty pounds per annum, and that *very many most respectable students contrive to do with little more than half so much money.*"<sup>1</sup> Our readers may perhaps remember the touching fact recorded in the life of Dr. Adam, the very eminent Rector of the High School of Edinburgh, — that when at College, his dinner consisted of a penny roll ; and that to save the expense of a fire, he was accustomed to eat it as he climbed some long and lonely stair in the Old Town, where there are houses of fourteen stories in height.<sup>2</sup> We have heard of students from Ireland who brought with them a bag of *scones*, or cakes of oatmeal, on which *alone* they lived in some poor garret. And many a poor family is pinching itself at home, to keep the clever son at College. A clergyman of the Church of Scotland who published a work on *Clerical Economics* dedicated it " To a father who, on a hundred pounds a year, brought up six sons to learned professions, and who has often sent his last shilling to each of them in their turn, when they were at College." The motto which Sydney Smith proposed for the *Edinburgh Review*, "*Tenui musam meditamus avena,*" — " We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal," might be the motto of many a Glasgow student. A few years since, a poor fellow, whose education was so deficient that he could not earn anything by teaching others, supported himself by becoming a night-watchman, and studied his Greek Testament by the light of the

<sup>1</sup> *Peter's Letters*. Vol. i. p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> " Life of Dr. Adam," in Chambers' *Scottish Biographical Dictionary*.

street lamps. The Census of 1851 in Glasgow was in a great degree taken up by students, thankful thus to make a few shillings. We cannot refrain from making a quotation which tells a story which, to our personal knowledge is true in scores of cases, — aye, in hundreds : —

My father was a poor man — a common working wright, in a little village not far from Glasgow. My mother and he pinched themselves blue to give me my education. I went to college when I was about fifteen years old, and they sent me in cheese and vegetables, even oat-meal to make my porridge, every week by the carrier. I did not taste butcher's meat three times, I believe, in the first three years I was a student. But then I began to do something for myself. I got a little private teaching, and by degrees ceased to be a burden on the old people. Step by step I wrought on, till I became tutor in a gentleman's family. Then I was licensed, and I remained a preacher for twenty years, — sometimes living in a family, sometimes teaching from house to house, and latterly I had a school of my own in Glasgow. I was forty years old and upwards ere I got the kirk, Mr. Wald; and my dear parents never lived to see me in it.<sup>1</sup>

Not less true and not less touching is another passage from the same masterly pen : —

If I was poor, I had no objections to living poorly. After attending classes and hospitals from daybreak to sunset, I contented myself with a dinner and supper in one, of bread and milk, — or perhaps a mess of potatoes, with salt for their only sauce. A deal table, a half-broken chair, and a straw pallet, were all the furniture I had about me; and very rarely did I indulge myself with a fire. But I could wrap a blanket over my legs, trim my lamp, and plunge into the world of books, and forget everything.<sup>2</sup>

There is not a whit of exaggeration in Sir Walter Scott's description of the early struggles of Dominie Sampson. And we confess we cannot read without emotion the description in *Matthew Wald*, of the poor tutor going for his evening's work with his pupils, to the house

<sup>1</sup> *History of Matthew Wald*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Matthew Wald*, 203-5.

of some wealthy burgess, and being saluted in his lobby "with the amiable fragrance of soup, roast meat, rum-punch, and the like dainties," himself just from his spare mess of potatoes and salt. Ah, there is much pathos about the daily life of the poor students of Glasgow! Let no one indulge in the heartless sneer at the poor fellow's threadbare coat, his whity-brown paper, his linen so coarse that it looks like sail-cloth, his patched boots and his worn anxious face. God bless him, and help him, say we! Speak kindly to him, dandified young student; deal gently with him, grave professor; his heart is very likely so full already that it will almost break with one drop more. He is the hope and pride, and the anxious care, too, of some poor family far away, whose members are grinding themselves down to life's last necessities to give him advantages which (sad that in the nature of things it must be) will, when obtained, draw a line of separation between him and themselves. They will make him, perhaps, the scholar and the gentleman, but all this will only serve to introduce him into a world of which they know nothing. They may be proud of him still, when he gets a kirk at last; but he will perhaps marry a lady, and then they will hardly ever see him, and it will be with a vague, blank feeling of disappointment when they do. And the old parents — it may be, left alone in the last days of life, with the single return for years of struggle, that they can say that the son whom they hardly ever see, is a parish minister a hundred miles off — may think that, after all, it might have been better had he saved his home-bred virtues in his parents' lowly lot, and by his daily presence smoothed his parents' passage to their lowly grave.

•. It is sad to think that not unfrequently all this effort

and self-denial on the part of the family at home, and the student at college, are found in the case of poor fellows who are so completely deficient in ability, that it is impossible that they should ever get on in life. The Divinity Hall of each University is never without a sprinkling of lads who would have made excellent ploughmen, or schoolmasters, or mechanics, but whose whole future life must be blasted by the unfortunate fact that nothing would serve themselves or their relations but that they must try to get into the church. We have known of poor deformed creatures who toiled and starved on year after year, hoping, with a despairing earnestness that in some cases settled down into monomania, that they might yet pass the Presbytery, and be presented to a living. It is a very painful duty which the Presbyteries have sometimes to perform, in rejecting applicants for orders who are manifestly unfit, yet whose rejection crushes the cherished hopes and foils the utmost endeavors of a poor family for many years. We believe that such a case has been as that such a person has come up for examination five or six successive times at intervals of a year or two, before abandoning the hope of passing. We have heard of a case in which a grown-up man, on being told by the Moderator or President of the Presbytery that he "was recommended still further to prosecute his studies," the mild formula by which rejection is conveyed, dropped senseless on the floor of the court, and lay for long as dead. We know of a case in which a person, in like manner rejected, had to be conveyed to a place of restraint, a wild raving maniac. The dogged energy and determination of the Scottish character can bear a man through almost anything so long as hope remains; but when the last hope breaks down, we believe that the firm

Scottish heart may be roused to a frenzy of despair as keen as ever stirred in the hot blood of the tropics.

Those students who are poor and who possess fair scholarship, very generally maintain themselves by private teaching. They instruct lads in the junior classes, hastening from house to house in the evenings, and usually remaining one hour with each pupil. The fee for such attendance is a guinea a month. We find it mentioned in the *Life of James Halley*, one of the most distinguished of Glasgow students in recent years, that during the period in which he made his reputation, "his principal source of maintenance was the product of his own exertion as a private tutor. A very considerable portion of his time — always four, and sometime five, hours a day — was taken up in this way. This very materially enhances his merit in maintaining so high a position in all the classes."<sup>1</sup> Campbell the poet, writing of a period when he was just eighteen years old, records that "after my return from Mull, I supported myself during the winter by private tuition."<sup>2</sup> We have known of students who made a respectable figure in their classes, who were engaged in teaching for six, eight, or ten hours a day. There are a great many exhibitions, or *Bursaries*, as they are called, which are intended to aid deserving students. These vary in amount from three or four pounds a year up to forty. But, unhappily, hardly any of them are open to competition, and they are very frequently given to those students who least need them and least deserve them.

On the whole, looking at the way in which Glasgow

<sup>1</sup> *Memoir of James Halley, B.A., Student of Theology*, p. 17. Edinburgh. 1842.

<sup>2</sup> *Life*, prefixed to *Poems*. Edition of 1851; p. 28.

students generally *do* live, and the way in which they *may* live, we must admit that it was not without reason that the old Glasgow merchant in *Cyril Thornton* boasted of the accessibility of a Scotch University education :—

So ye've come down here to be a colleaginer. It's a lang gait to gang for learning. But after a', I am no sure that you could ha'e done better. Our colleges here are no bund down like yours in the south, by a wheen auld and fizzionless rules, and we dinna say to ilka student, either bring three hundred pounds in your pouch, or gang about your business. We dinna lock the door o' learning, as they do at Oxford and Cambridge, and shut out a' that canna bring a gouden key in their hand, but keep it on the sneck, that onybody that likes may open it.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the four years' course in Arts, students for the church begin their theological studies, which extend over four years more. On "entering the Divinity Hall," as it is termed, the student lays aside the red gown, and for the remainder of his college course wears no distinguishing dress. During each of these four sessions he attends the lectures of the Professor of Theology, and the lectures of the Professors of Hebrew and Church History for two sessions each. The Professor of Theology is necessarily a clergyman, and is, *ex officio*, a member of the Presbytery of Glasgow. Laymen are eligible for the Chairs of Hebrew and Church History ; but in practice they are always filled by clergymen. Dr. Hill is the Professor of Theology ; Mr. Weir, a young clergyman, has lately succeeded to the Chair of Hebrew ; and that of Church History is filled by Dr. Jackson, an able man, whose besetting sin is a tendency to become most abstrusely metaphysical in his lectures. The Hebrew class is taught very much as the Latin and Greek classes

<sup>1</sup> *Youth and Manhood of Cyril Thornton*. Vol. i. p. 60.

are ; the Theology and Church History, like the Philosophy classes. The number of students attending the Divinity Hall is, we believe, above a hundred. The vacancies in the Church caused by death average about thirty-five annually, and Glasgow College alone could supply nearly that number of candidates for orders. The University of Edinburgh turns out yearly almost as many ; the Universities of St. Andrew's and Aberdeen as many more. Our readers may suppose that there is a pretty sharp competition for every living that becomes vacant, while the supply is thus nearly threefold in excess of the demand.

After the student for the Church has completed his college course, he applies for orders to the Presbytery within whose bounds he resides. He is "taken on trials" by that Church-court. He is examined in all the branches he has studied at college, and is required to compose and read to the Presbytery five or six discourses. These "trials" occupy perhaps six months, at the end of which time he is licensed to preach. He is not permitted to administer the sacraments until he has been ordained ; and in practice no one is ever ordained till he has been appointed to a church as minister. It will thus be seen that nearly nine years pass from the time a student enters college, down to the period at which he is licensed to preach. If licensed at the age of twenty-two, as is not unfrequently the case, having left off his classical studies six or seven years before, it may be left to our readers to imagine how much claim he can have to be regarded as a *scholar*, in the English sense. We think that reform in the Scotch University system is imperatively needed, and in no respect more imperatively than in the abbreviation of the enormous course for the

Church. To finish that course in anything like reasonable time, the student must enter college at an absurdly early age.

The competition for academic honors is as keen at Glasgow as it can be anywhere. The prizes for general eminence in each class are voted by the students in it, at the end of the session. The prizes are almost always given with perfect fairness; so the system is better in practice than it looks in theory. When ten or twelve prizes are given in a class, it may be supposed that the degrees of merit are less strongly marked among the lowest on the list of prizemen, and private feeling may weigh in the adjudication of the inferior prizes. But there is hardly an instance on record of the first, second, or third prize going otherwise than as the professor would have awarded it. The first prize in each class is of course a matter of special ambition; it has often been contested with an eagerness prejudicial to health and even life. We have known of Glasgow students who for five months of the session, have allowed themselves not more than three or four hours of sleep nightly, the entire waking day being devoted to study. In such cases the feverish anxiety of the competition has sometimes kept up the student in working trim to the end of the session, while at its close, the stimulus removed, he has utterly broken down. The higher Latin and Greek prizes are keenly contested, as success in obtaining any of them marks out a student for appointment to one of the *Snell Exhibitions*. Under the Snell endowment, the University of Glasgow sends ten students to Balliol College, Oxford, giving to four of them a stipend of £135 a year each, and to the remaining six £120 a year each. These exhibitions are tenable for ten years. And for the credit

of the University, the professors generally send to Oxford the best classical students who are willing to go. Classical learning, however, is undervalued in Scotland, and the principal honors of the University go for proficiency in Mental Philosophy, in its various departments. For students who purpose completing their course in Scotland, the testing classes are those of Logic and Moral Philosophy — Moral Philosophy implying at Glasgow a complete course of Metaphysics. Whoever obtains the first prize in that class, is pretty safe to carry the honors of the Divinity classes. The work of these classes demands the same kind of ability ; and, with the exception of importations from other universities, which are rarely of first-class students, the competition in these classes will be with the same men.

Among the most coveted distinctions of the University, are the prizes for the "University Essays." These prizes are eight or nine in number annually, and the competition for them is extensive. Two gold medals, given on alternate years, are open to the competition of all students attending any class in the University ; one of these is given for an essay in history, the other for an essay in political economy. Then there are one or two prizes open to the competition of all students of theology ; two or three to all students of philosophy ; one to all students of medicine. The following, from the published prize list, will give an idea of the kind of subjects prescribed.

In 1842, the Gartmore gold medal was given for the best essay on "The Expediency or Inexpediency of Capital Punishments." In 1844, for the best essay on "Secondary Punishments." In 1848, for the best essay on "Under what Circumstances, and in what Mode, should a Constitutional State encourage Emigration ?"

In 1843, the Ewing gold medal was given for the best account of "The Circumstances which led to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, with the Results of that Treaty." In 1845, the subject was, "An Account of the First Partition of Poland in 1772." In 1847, "An Account of the Establishment and Progress of the British Empire in India, to the termination of the Government of Warren Hastings." Among the subjects to be written on in different years by students of Philosophy, we find "An Analysis of the Faculty of Judging;" "Poetic Diction, its Use and Abuse by the Orators;" "The Nature and Influence of Motives in Moral Action;" "The Historical Episode and its Conditions, Critically Considered, Illustrated by Examples;" "A Classification and Analysis of the Passions." Among the subjects for students of Theology, we have, "The Analogy of the Mosaic and Christian Dispensations;" "The Extent of the Atonement of Christ;" "Baptismal Regeneration;" "Apostolical Succession;" "Auricular Confession." And in Physics, "The Principles and Practicability of Atmospheric Railways;" "The Form and Construction of Arches;" "The Methods of Supplying Large Towns with Water."

These essays are very laboriously written. They are often complete works on the subjects proposed, extending to some hundreds of pages, and the result of original research and protracted thought. We have reason to know that the prize essays written by one very successful student in one year extended to nearly two thousand pages. There are generally two or three of the University essay prizes open to the competition of each student each year; and besides the prizes for general eminence voted by the students, there is usually, in each class, a prize for an

essay, which is adjudicated by the professor. A student of extraordinary energy may thus compete for five or six essay prizes in one session. Sometimes a man who has carried all the honors which belong to his own department, makes an excursion into another field, to find a fresh subject and new competitors. An amusing instance of this is recorded in the *Life of Halley*: —

In the summer of 1834 he enrolled as a student in the botanical class. This was done chiefly with a view to benefit his health. The garden in which the lecture-room was situated lay at a distance of about two miles from his place of residence, and the hour of lecture was from eight to nine in the morning. This secured for three months a system of early and regular exercise. It happened that during that session a gentleman, whose name was not given, empowered Dr. (now Sir William) Hooker to offer a gold medal for the best essay on "The Natural History and Uses of the Potato." Halley had not paid much attention to the study of botany, and the prescribed subject of the essay did not at all lie in his way, yet he determined to write by way of amusement, and, as he said, "to beat the medicals." The result was a treatise of 172 closely-written quarto pages. It was pronounced the best; and the interloper carried off the medal, fairly won, from the medical students on their own proper field. Whether this achievement had found its way into the *Farmer's Magazine*, we cannot tell, but it had nearly procured for him a reputation of which he was not desirous. One day a stranger was ushered into his room, announcing himself as an Irish agriculturist, who had devoted considerable attention to the failure of the potato crop. Having heard that Mr. Halley had been studying the same subject, he had waited upon him to hear the result of his researches. Mr. Halley received his visitor with due politeness and gravity; laid aside his folios, and entered, with all becoming solemnity, into the comparative merits of late and early planting — of whole sets and single eyes, and after a long consultation dismissed his visitor, lightly delighted with the interview.<sup>1</sup>

The subjects of the University prize essays are announced on the first of May in each year; the essays are taken into the Principal's house in December following. Each essay bears two mottoes, and is accompanied by a

<sup>1</sup> *Halley's Life*, pp. 23, 24.

sealed letter bearing the same mottoes, and containing the name of the author, with a declaration that the essay is of his unaided composition. The successful essay is announced at the distribution of prizes in the Common Hall on the first of May, and the letter containing the author's name is opened in the presence of the assembled *Comitia*. The other letters are destroyed unopened. The prize essay is placed in the library, where, however, it is accessible only to the professors. A proof how fairly the students vote the highest prizes, is furnished by the fact that these prizes for essays, adjudicated by the professors in utter ignorance of their authorship, are given in nineteen cases out of twenty to students who have "taken" (such is the college phrase) the first prize in their respective classes by the students' votes. We have examined the prize-list for a number of years, and we find that the honors awarded by students and professors almost invariably fall to the same men.

The distribution of prizes on May-day is a gay scene. Students and professors alike are in high spirits in the anticipation of their holiday time. Tickets of admission to the ceremony are in great request. Our readers may perhaps remember that the first poetical composition of the author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, was *A Description of the Distribution of Prizes in the Common Hall of the University of Glasgow, on the first of May, 1793*. All old Glasgow students have many pleasant associations with this day of the year.

The first of May is the day fixed by immemorial usage in the University for the distribution of the prizes, a day looked forward to with "hopes, and fears that kindle hope," by many youthful and ardent spirits. The Great Hall of the college on that day certainly presents a very pleasing and animated spectacle. The academical distinctions are bestowed with much of ceremonial pomp, in the presence of a vast

concourse of spectators, and it is not uninteresting to mark the flush of bashful triumph on the cheek of the victor; the sparkling of his downcast eye as the hall is rent with loud applause, when he advances to receive the badge of honor assigned him by the voice of his fellow-students. It is altogether a sight to stir the spirit in the youthful bosom, and stimulate into healthy action faculties which, but for such excitement, might have continued in unbroken slumber.<sup>1</sup>

The Common Hall is a plain square apartment, with a gallery at each end. It is capable of containing about a thousand persons. Along one side runs a raised bench, occupied by the professors. The Principal presides at the distribution, unless when the Lord Rector is present. Long before the appointed hour, which is always ten A. M., the body of the hall is thronged with students, and the galleries with ladies. The students beguile the time by throwing volleys of peas at one another; after a distribution, several bushels are gathered up from the floor. There is a prescriptive toleration for peas, but no other missile is permitted; and a strong-minded man who introduced eggs, narrowly escaped expulsion. The bald heads of some of the servants present tempting marks, and are furiously assailed. At length the professors (all of whom wear gowns) enter in procession, preceded by the *bedellus*, bearing a huge mace of silver. A prayer in Latin is offered by the Principal. Then the University prize essays are announced; the letters containing the authors' names are opened, and the prizes are delivered to the successful students by the Lord Rector or Principal. The divinity prizes are given next; then the medical, then the philosophy and classical. The proceedings are over about one o'clock; and ere the sun has set, the last red gown, now sadly faded from its November brightness, has disappeared from the streets of Glasgow. The

<sup>1</sup> *Cyril Thornton*. Vol. i. pp. 215, 216.

students are scattered over the country ; tutors in gentlemen's families, teaching parish schools, acting as missionaries or catechists under the clergy of large towns, watching sheep, busy at farm-work, and some of the more distinguished, by the time a week has passed, busy collecting materials for next year's University essays.

The names of the students stand in the class catalogue in *Latin* ; and the professor, in addressing a student, uses his Latinized Christian name in the vocative. There is no such thing known in Scotland as that entire sinking of the Christian name which is usual in the public schools of England. At one period the professors at Glasgow always addressed their students in the Latin language. The impression produced on a stranger was decidedly that of the ridiculous. Mr. Lockhart tells us that when he went to the class-room of Mr. Young, the very eminent Greek Professor at Glasgow, forty years since, the first thing done was calling over the roll of the class, which was done by one of the students : —

The professor was quite silent during this space, unless where some tall, awkward Irishman, or young indigenous blunderer happened to make his *entrée* in a manner more noisy than suited the place, on which occasion a sharp cutting voice from the chair was sure to thrill in their ears some brief but decisive query, or command, or rebuke : — “ *Quid agas tu, in isto angulo, pedibus strepitans et garriens !* ” “ *Cave tibi, Dugalde M' Quhirter, et tuas res agas !* ” “ *Notetur, Phelimius O'Shaughnessy, sero ingrediens, ut solvat duas asses sterlingenses !* ” “ *Iterumne admonendus es, Nicolaei Jarvie !* ” “ *Quid hoc rei, Franciscus Warper !* ” &c. &c. &c.

The custom of the Professor addressing the class in Latin has now almost entirely disappeared. The last vestiges of it linger in the Philosophy class-rooms, in such beautifully classical sentences as “ *Silentium, gen-*

tlemen, silentium!" "Nigellius M'Lamroch is breaking silentium!" The fact is, the custom was found to be a very inconvenient one at once to professors and students. It is not too much to say that most of the latter understood English very much better than Latin, and few of the professors had such a command of Latin as to be able to express themselves in it correctly when they got angry. It is a tradition in Glasgow College that a professor, who died some years since, once commanded a noisy student to be still. The lad replied that he had been perfectly so. The professor's indignation at this misstatement was too much for his Latinity. He burst out, "*Nonne video te jumpantem over the table!*"

The University library is a very good one. We believe that in Scotland it ranks second only to the Advocates' library in Edinburgh. It was founded in the fifteenth century. We understand that the Senate can afford to expend on the purchase of new books about £1,000 a year. Of this sum the Treasury pays £700 annually as compensation for the loss of the Stationers' Hall privilege. Each student has likewise to pay seven shillings annually to the library, and in return has the privilege of having two volumes at a time during the session at his own home, and of consulting as many as he pleases in the reading-room. "No novels, romances, tales, nor plays" are lent to the students. These, however, pour into the library in great profusion for the use of the wives and daughters of the professors.

At one time, degrees in Arts were granted after a merely formal examination. The examination is now a real one, so far as it extends. It may interest some of our readers to know its extent. For the ordinary

degree of Bachelor of Arts, the subjects of examination are as follows :—

In Latin : Livy, Three Books ; Virgil, *Æneid*, Three Books ; Horace, Odes, Three Books.

In Greek : The Four Gospels ; Homer, Three Books.

In Logic : The Intellectual Powers ; the Ancient or Aristotelian Logic ; the Modern or Inductive Logic

In Moral Philosophy : The Intellectual, Active, and Moral Powers ; the Will ; Practical Ethics ; Natural Theology.

To obtain the degree of M. A., the student must further be examined

In Natural Philosophy : The subjects lectured on in the class.

In Mathematics ; Euclid, first Six Books ; Plane Trigonometry ; Simple and Quadratic Equations.

For the degrees with honors, the examinations are much more severe.

The examinations for degrees are held on the Thursdays in March and April. With very little exception, they are conducted *vivâ voce*. The statute requires that they should take place in the presence of at least two professors, but in practice the candidate for a degree is examined in each branch by the professor under whom he has studied it, the other professor present not interfering in the examination, nor even attending to it. A strong effort has been made of late years to raise the standard of attainment required in graduates ; and sometimes as many as one third of the students who go up for examination are plucked. In the good old times no one was ever rejected ; to ask for a degree, and to get it, were convertible terms. We have already stated that very many students take no degree ; no advantage is derived in after-

life from having taken one. It is not required of men entering the Church, that they should have one. And in the case of the ordinary run of young men, whose desire is to get through their "*curriculum*" with as little trouble as possible, it is hardly to be expected that some toil and some anxiety will be endured, with no inducement of countervailing advantage. Still (counting both Bachelors and Masters), some sixty or seventy students take their degree in each year; and among the graduates, we may say, are all students of any eminence who have advanced so far in their course as to have it in their power to go up. The degree in honors is very seldom sought, even by the most distinguished, except under the stimulus of an occasional prize. In order to go up for such a degree with the least hope of success, a man must spend on his preparations an amount of labor which would yield a better return if given to class-work or the composition of prize essays. College distinction in Scotland, though so eagerly sought, does not aid a man in after-life as it does in England. Even in the Church it goes for very little. It may lead to a good deal being expected of a young preacher at his first outset: but it is his popularity with ordinary congregations that determines his success, unless where patronage is administered with a higher hand than it has been of late years in Scotland; and very great dunces indeed are often endowed by nature with very loud voices, and are quite competent to practise a howling and sudorific oratory, which goes down amazingly with the least intelligent of the Scottish peasantry.

A marked feature of Glasgow college life is what is termed the *Blackstone Examination*. The name is derived from an antique chair of oak, with a seat of black marble, which is occupied by the student under examina-

tion. This examination is compulsory. Before entering the Logic class, the students are examined on the Blackstone in Greek. Before entering the Moral Philosophy, in Logic; and before entering the Natural Philosophy, in Moral Philosophy. This examination is a mere form: no one is ever turned at it. It is amusing to witness the odd mixture of Latin and English in which, on this occasion, communication is held between the student and the professor. The latter is seated in a large chair at one side of the table; on the other side stands the formidable Blackstone. A great crowd of students fills the examination-room; "Carole Dickie," says the professor. Carolus, pale and trembling, walks up to the table. "Well, Carole," says the professor, "what do you profess?" Answer: "Doctissime Professor, Evangelium secundum Joannem profiteor." Carolus then takes his seat on the Blackstone, and construes a verse or two.

A prize is given yearly to the student who passes the best examination on the Blackstone, in Latin; also for the best in Greek. This prize is a matter of very keen competition, as success in obtaining it, coming at the commencement of the session, almost insures a student of the first prize in the class. A very great number of books is often "professed" by competitors for these prizes. There are traditions in the college of students who arrived at the examination-room with a wheelbarrow, containing the works on which they were willing to be examined. The examination is *vivâ voce*, and lasts for several hours. A number of years since, three competitors went in for the Greek Blackstone prize: Tait, Smith, and Halley. Halley made a most brilliant appearance, and carried off the prize. He studied for the Scotch Church, but died before obtaining license. Of his competitors, Smith went

to Cambridge, where he became Senior Wrangler; Tai, succeeded Dr. Arnold as head-master of Rugby, and is now Bishop of London. It cannot be said that any special brilliancy of talent recommended him to that eminent place; but it is generally admitted that he has filled it with great judgment.

The character and conduct of the students of Glasgow are generally unexceptionable. There may be a black sheep now and then, but such cases are very rare. Indeed, no one without considerable moral stamina would ever think of living the life of nine tenths of the Glasgow students. And "their lot circumscribes" the errors and follies of which they could by possibility be guilty. They have not the money to indulge the tastes, whether good or bad, of most English University men. Wine-parties, riding-horses, escapades to London, coursing and hunting, even rowing matches, are beyond the tether of a man to whom every penny is a serious consideration; and who cannot but think of his poor sisters wearing out their eyes at needlework, and his old father denying himself the long-prized solace of a little tobacco, to keep the brother and the son at college. He would be a black-hearted villain who could be vicious or even extravagant, when either extravagance or vice would be sure to frustrate *their* hopes and break *their* hearts. The grosser vices are, we believe, unknown. An occasional *gaudeamus*, at which whisky-toddy is the chief luxury; a visit to the theatre, made with fear and trembling; a row with the police once in eight or ten years; constitute the utmost dissipation of the mass of Glasgow students. Mr. Lockhart's description of the *morale* at the University of St. Andrew's holds true of Glasgow as well:

I lived a life almost solitary, and in general certainly very simple

and innocent. The lads there were mostly poor, and had few means of signalizing themselves by any folly. Our greatest diversion in the way of sport was a game at golf; and we had little notion of any debauch beyond a pan of toasted cheese, and a bottle or two of the College ale, now and then on a Saturday night.<sup>1</sup>

The service of the Scotch Church used to be performed on Sundays during the session in the Common Hall, but hardly any one went to it, and a few years since the arrangement was allowed to drop. The students are now permitted to dispose of themselves on Sunday as they please.

We have mentioned that a number of professors have houses in the College. One court is filled entirely with these houses, and a few others are jammed in, in unexpected corners of the class-room courts. They are all quaint, old-fashioned dwellings, with a strong smack of academic repose about them. The apartments are small, and the ceilings very low. The very filthiest lane in Glasgow runs parallel to one side of the quadrangle, at a distance of some twenty yards. During the railway mania, a company obtained an act to remove the College buildings to a pretty situation in the western outskirts of the town, converting the present College and gardens into a terminus. Although the New College was to have been a magnificent piece of Gothic architecture, the general feeling was against the abandonment and desecration of the old walls. But the resident professors and their wives and daughters, long poisoned by the vile odors of the "Havannah Venpel," were delighted at the idea of a transference to the pleasant slopes of Kelvin Grove. The railway company, however, went to ruin, and the New College scheme fell to the ground.

<sup>1</sup> *Matthew Wald*, p. 57.

Glasgow has by far the best endowed University in Scotland. The professors form a close corporation, and keep their affairs very much to themselves; so it is only from common report we can speak of the value of the several chairs. But upon that authority, we believe that the Chair of Greek is worth above £1,000 a year; those of Philosophy from £800 to £900. That of Theology, though the premier chair of the University, does not stand first in point of emolument. It is said to be worth about £600 a year. The sums mentioned do not include the value of the residences. Many of the more recently-founded chairs have exceedingly small endowments, and their income is derived mainly from the fees paid by the students. In all the classes, the professors retain the fees paid them: so that a professor's income may be materially increased should his fame attract a greater number of disciples. When Sir D. Sandford was Greek professor, he crowded his class-room not merely with regular students, but with Glasgow clergymen, lawyers, and merchants, who attended his eloquent and enthusiastic prelections. And we have heard it said that in those days the revenue of the Greek chair was above £1,500 a year.

Among other little advantages, the professors are free from payment of the local taxes; they are also supplied with coals and gas. An abundant supply of newspapers and periodicals is provided for themselves and their families. And the fine old "Fore Hall," a large apartment, wainscoted with black oak, and by far the most picturesque chamber in the University, is occupied by the professors as a club-room. On the whole, a Glasgow professor on the old foundation leads a very comfortable life.

One or two of the professors are unable to induce

any one to attend their lectures. It may therefore be regarded as difficult to explain what purpose these professors serve. Dr. Nichol, the late eloquent Professor of Astronomy, gave occasionally short courses of popular lectures, which were open to all students, and which were well attended. But no class demanding labor and sustained attention will find students, unless attendance upon it is made compulsory. We think it would be utterly useless to found new chairs in the Scotch Universities, as has lately been proposed. We believe that to do so would be the very reverse of a reform or improvement. Unless attendance upon them is made an essential part of the *curriculum*, no one would attend them. And we believe that to make attendance upon them compulsory would, in the case of many a student who has more than enough to do already, be the last pound that breaks the camel's back. It is in the Latin and Greek classes that reform is needed. Raise the standard of scholarship by an examination at entering College; give the professors of Latin and Greek *professor's* work to do, not that of hedge schoolmasters; shorten to half, the preposterously extended course for the Church; let students enter the University at eighteen or nineteen instead of at twelve or thirteen: they will thus not be hurried through the Philosophy classes while mere children,—and the Scotch Universities will have all the reform they need. But on this subject we have not time to enter.

The first fortnight of the session, every alternate year is taken up with a series of violent disturbances connected with the election of the Lord Rector. We believe that at one time this officer had various duties to perform; but for many years past his sole function has been to give an address to the students in the Common

Hall upon his inauguration. The Lord Rector is elected by the professors and students. The election goes almost invariably upon political grounds, and is conducted with unparalleled bitterness of party feeling. Although the professors always vote at the election, they profess to leave the management of it in the hands of the students—the leaders of whom, however, are virtually directed in their movements by the professors of their own party. All the arts usual at other contested elections are brought into play, aggravated by the hot-headedness incidental to the youth of the parties engaged. Public meetings are held, and addresses and squibs of all kinds are printed and circulated in immense profusion. The most violent attacks are made by either party upon the leaders of the other, and upon the opposing candidate. Sometimes these attacks end in physical violence. At a meeting in one of the class-rooms, a few years ago, the platform was charged by a large force of antagonistic students. It was gallantly defended with cudgel and fist, and more than one of the attacking party was felled like an ox. The air is darkened in the Hall on the election-day by clouds of peas, of which missiles the professors get even more than their share. These dignitaries always behave with great good-humor upon the occasion; and the *saturday* once over, discipline is restored, and all parties return quietly to work.

Among the Lord Rectors of the last thirty years, are, Lord Jeffrey, Sir James Mackintosh, Lord Brougham, Thomas Campbell (who was elected in opposition to Sir Walter Scott), the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Earl of Derby, Sir Robert Peel, Sir James Graham, Earl Russell, Lord Macaulay, the Duke of Argyll, and Sir E. Bulwer Lytton. The inaugural addresses since Jeffrey's

time have been published in a large volume. Edmund Burke was rector in 1783; he fairly broke down in his address, and stopped in the middle of it. Brougham's address is regarded as the most eloquent; Macaulay's was a very fine one. We remember that great man, in a large yellow waistcoat, getting on in a slow sing-song through his address, and drinking a little water at the close of each short paragraph. The Rector wears at his inauguration a very ancient and shabby gown, decorated with faded gold lace. It is never forgot in Glasgow College, that Sir Robert Peel said, on assuming it, that he felt greater pride in putting on that gown, than in putting on the robes of Prime Minister.

This chapter has run to such a length that we must forego our intention of saying something about the conflicts with the police, few and far between, yet very desperate when they occur; of the occasional breaches of discipline; of traditions of the odd professors of the last generation; of publications written by the students, most of which are remarkably poor; of the extraordinary scenes which are sometimes presented at the breakfast-parties given by the professors in the course of the session. Every Saturday morning in the months of March and April, each professor has fifteen or twenty of his class at breakfast, till he has got through his roll. It would require another pen than ours to depict the sheepishness and timidity of some poor fellows on entering The Presence, their gradually growing confidence, and the jaunty and jocular free-and-easiness which they occasionally attain before the close of the entertainment.

We have thus endeavored to afford our readers some

idea of how things go on in the University of Glasgow: an institution which sends forth from its plain and even tumble-down class-rooms, "a mighty population of men, who have a kind and measure of education which fits them for taking a keen and active management in the affairs of ordinary life;" and whose long course of study many a one has entered on a raw boy, and emerged from comparatively a thoughtful man. We can but very rarely trace the after career of Glasgow students, as we often may trace that of Oxford and Cambridge men, in the history of the senate and the country. A seat on the Scotch Bench is about the highest thing that a Glasgow man can look to, and by far the most eminent among the students of Glasgow pass into the simple life of a Scotch parish minister. It is quite remarkable to what a degree the Church absorbs the highest talent of the University. And it is a significant fact, that only two Glasgow students — Campbell and Jeffrey — have ever risen to the dignity of Lord Rector.

Yet there are few Glasgow students who do not cherish a fond recollection of their College life, even though it may have been a hard one at the time. For ourselves, as we look back, not so many years, that time rises again before us. We call to mind the dark mornings on which we hurried to College, only half awake; the midnight hours of solitary study, when we heard the clock strike two, three, four, five, through the silent house; the time when we wearily rose to our day's work, and saw the moon hardly moved from that place in the sky which it held when we lay down to our poor hour of rest. We call to mind the half-dozen chairs littered with old books, fished out from the dustiest corners of the college library; the pages of paper daily covered, with a

pleasant sense, unknown to other work, that here was something tangible accomplished ; the indescribable feeling of weariness growing day by day ; the pen which, towards the end of the session, we could sometimes scarcely hold in the trembling hand, till we had got warmed with half an hour's work ; the "constitutional walk" for an hour before dinner ; the delightful Saturday evening allowed to relaxation ; the carrying in the prize essays ; the list made out of all the prizes we were competing for, how many we shall not say ; the thankfulness rather than pride with which, during the last fortnight of the session, we marked off each in succession as won ; the throbbing anxiety of the first of May, which was to decide the University essay prizes ; and how musical the Principal's voice as he read out the mottoes we knew so well ; then the delightful relief of total leisure in those bright days of May ; the summer-time spent in research and labor against another session ; the intense veneration for *work* which a man comes to have when he knows what it means. Nothing to others, all these things are deeply interesting to one's own self ; and perhaps they may touch some chords of recollection in some of our old college companions, now scattered over every quarter of the earth. We believe that for real hard work, for real mental discipline, for training to habits of industry and self-denial, for fitting average men to fill respectably an average place in society, there are very few things better than *College Life at Glasgow*.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONCERNING THE WORLD'S OPINION:

#### WITH SOME THOUGHTS ON COWED PEOPLE.

**I**T seems to me that there are few things in which it is more difficult to hold the just mean, than our feeling as to the opinion of those around us. For the most part, you will find human beings taking a quite extreme position as to what may be called the World's Opinion. They pay either too much regard to it, or too little. Either they are thoroughly cowed by it, or they stand towards it in an attitude of defiance. The cowed people, unquestionably, are in the majority. Most people live in a vague atmosphere of dread of the world, and of what the world is saying of them. You may discern the belief which prevails with the steady-going mass of humankind, in the typical though not historical fact which was taught most of us in childhood, — that **DON'T CARE** came to a bad end. The actual idea which is present to very many minds is difficult to define. Even to attempt to define it takes away that vagueness which is of the essence of its nature, and which is a great reason of the fear it excites. And the actual idea varies much in old and different minds, and in the same mind at different times. Sometimes, if put into shape, it would amount

to this:—that some great and uncounted number of human beings is watching the person, is thinking of him, is forming an estimate of him, and an opinion as to what he ought to do. Sometimes the world's opinion becomes a more tangible thing: it means the opinion of the little circle of the person's acquaintance; or the opinion of the family in which he or she lives; or the opinion of even some single individual of a somewhat strong, and probably somewhat coarse and meddling nature. In such a case the world becomes personified in the typical Mrs. Grundy; and the fear of the world's opinion is expressed in the well-known question—What will Mrs. Grundy say?

Most people, then, live in a vague fear of that which may be styled Mrs. Grundy: and are cowed into abject submission not merely to her ascertained opinions, but also to what they fancy that possibly her opinions may be. Others, again—a smaller number, and a number lessening as the individuals who constitute it grow older—confront Mrs. Grundy, and defy her. DON'T CARE was a leader of this little band. But even though Don't Care had not come to trouble, it is highly probable that as he advanced in years he would have found that he must care, and that he did care. For a good many years I have enjoyed the acquaintance and the conversation of a man who, even after he became Solicitor-General, held bravely yet temperately by the forlorn hope of which a large part has always consisted of the young and the wrongheaded; and from which, with advancing years and increasing experience, men are so apt to drop away. I know that it was not vaporizing in him to say, "The hissing of collected Europe, provided I knew the hissers could not touch me, would be a grateful sound rather than the reverse—that is, if heard

at a reasonable distance.”<sup>1</sup> But though I believe the words were sincere when he said them, yet I am convinced it was only by the stiffening of a moral nature, implying effort too great to last, that he was able to keep the feeling which these words express. I see in these words the expression of a desperate reaction against a strong natural bias ; and I believe that time would gradually crumble that resolute purpose down. By a determined effort you may hold out a heavy weight at arm's length for a few minutes ; you may defy and vanquish the law of gravitation for that short space ; but the law of gravitation, quietly and unvaryingly acting, will beat you at last. And even if Ellesmere could peacefully go about his duty, and tranquilly enjoy his home, with that universal hiss in his ears, I know of those into whose hearts that hiss would sink down,—whose hearts that hiss would break. How about his wife and children ? And how would the strong man himself feel, when day by day he saw by the pale cheek, the lined brow, the anxious eye, the unnatural submissiveness, that *they* were living in a moral atmosphere that was poisoning them ? Think of the little children coming in and saying that the other children would not play with them or speak to them. Think of the poor wife going to some meeting of charitable ladies, and left in a corner without one to notice her or take pity on her. Ah, my friend Ellesmere, once you have given hostages to fortune, we know where the world can make you feel !

Let us give a little time to clearing up our minds on this great practical question, as to the influence which of right belongs to the world's opinion ; as to the deference which a wise man will accord to it. Let us try to define that great shadowy phantom which holds numbers

<sup>1</sup> Ellesmere. in *Compressions of my Solitude*.

through all their life in a slavery which extends to all they say and do ; to the food they eat, and the raiment they put on, and the home they dwell in ; and in many cases even to what they think, and to what they will admit to themselves that they think. The tyranny of the world's opinion is a tyranny infinitely more subtle and farther-reaching than that of the Inquisition in its worst days ; one which passes its sentences, though no one knows who are the judges that pronounce them ; and one which inflicts its punishments by the hands of numbers who utterly disapprove them. And yet, one has not the comfort of feeling able to condemn this strange tribunal out and out ; you are obliged to confess that in the main its judgments are just, and its supervision is a wholesome one. Now and then it does things that are flagrantly unjust and absurd ; but if I could venture, with my experience of life, to lay down any general principle, it would be the principle, abhorrent to warm young hearts and to hasty young heads, that in the main the world's opinion is right in those matters to which the world's opinion has a right to extend. I dare say you will think that this is a general principle promulgated with considerable reservation. So it is ; and I hardly know to which thing, the principle or the reservation, it seems to me that the greater consideration is due.

It is wrong, doubtless, to be always thinking what people will say. It is a low and wretched state of mind to come to. There is no more contemptible or miserable mortal than one of whom *this* can be said : —

While you, you think  
What others think, or what you think they'll say ;  
Shaping your course by something scarce more tangible  
Than dreams, at best the shadows on the stream  
Of aspen trees by flickering breezes swayed —

Load me with irons, drive me from morn till night,  
 I am not the utter slave which that man is  
 Whose sole thought, word, and deed are built on what  
 The world may say of him!

The condition of mind described in these indignant lines is doubtless wrong and wretched. But still one feels that these lines must be understood with much qualification and restriction. Neither in moral principle, nor in common sense or taste, can one go with those who run to the other extreme. It is as well for most people to be cowed by a rule which in the main will keep them right, as to be suffered to run wild with no rule at all. The road to insanity is even more short and direct to the man who resolves that he shall do nothing like anybody else, than to the poor subdued creature in whom the fear of the world's judgment has run to that morbid excess that she fancies that as she goes along the street every one is pointing at her. There was nothing fine in Shelley's wearing a round blue jacket after he was a married man, just because men in general do not wear boys' jackets. And his writing *Atheist* after his name in the tourists' book, to shock people, does not strike me for its profanity half so much as for its idiotic silliness and its contemptible littleness. I do not admire the woman who walks about, a limp and conspicuous figure, in the days when crinoline is universally accepted. The extreme of crinoline is silly; the utter absence of it is silly; the wise and safe course is the middle one. I do not think it wise or admirable for a lady to walk a quarter of a mile bareheaded along a crowded street to a friend's house, even though thus she may save the trouble of going up-stairs for her bonnet. I do not approve the young fellow who tells you, when you

He will speak to him about some petty flying in the face of the conventional notion of propriety, that he will do exactly what he likes, and that he does not care a straw what any one may think or say. That young fellow is in a very unsafe, and a very unstable position. It is not likely that he will long remain at his present moral stand-point. It is extremely probable that after a few signal instances of mischief brought upon himself by that defiant spirit, he will be cowed into abject submission to what people may think, and become afraid almost to move or breathe for fear of what may be said by folk whose opinion he secretly despises. He will gain a reputation for want of common sense, which it will be very difficult to get rid of. And even the humblest return to his allegiance to Mrs. Grundy may fail to conciliate that individual's favor, lost by many former insults.

There are some persons who are bound, not merely in prudence, but in principle, to consider the world's opinion a good deal. They are bound, not merely to avoid evil, but to avoid even the appearance of evil. And this because their usefulness in this world may be very prejudicially affected by the unfavorable opinion of those around them. It is especially so with the clergy. A clergyman's usefulness depends very much on the estimation in which he is held by his parishioners. It is desirable that his parishioners should like him: it is quite essential that they should respect him. It is not wise in the parson to shock the prejudices of those around him. It will be his duty sometimes to yield to opinions which he thinks groundless. However fond a clergyman of the Anglican Church may be of a choral service, it will be extremely foolish and wrongheaded in him to endeavor to thrust such a service upon a congre-

gation of people who in their ignorance think it Popish. And it will not be prudent in a clergyman of the Scotch Church, placed in a remote country parish where the population retains a good deal of the old covenanting leaven, to fill his church windows with stained glass, or even to put a cross above the eastern gable. And such a man will also discern that it is his duty to practise a certain economy and reticence in the explaining of his views as to instrumental music in church, and liturgical services. If it be the fact that many rustics in the parish regard these things as marks of the Beast, he need not obtrude the fact that he holds a different opinion. For he would then, in some quarters, bring all his teaching into suspicion. Let Mr. Snarling take notice, that I am counselling no reserve in the grave matters of doctrine: no reserve, that is, in the sense of making your people fancy that you believe what you do not believe, or that you do not believe what you do. The only economy in doctrine which I should approve would be that of bringing out and applying the truth which seems most needful at the time, and best fitted for its exigencies. But as to other things, both in statement and in conduct, I hold by a high authority which states that many things may be lawful for the parson which are not expedient. And I believe that in little things the world's judgment is right in the main. There is a gravitation of society towards common sense: at least to approving it, if not to acting upon it. I am not going to defend hats and the like; or to stand up for our angular Western dress against the flowing garments of the East, though I believe our dress is more convenient if it be less graceful. And I do not believe there is any perverse bent of society to what is ugly and inconvenient

at least in male attire: if any hatter or tailor produced a better covering, which would be as cheap, it would doubtless find acceptance. But I hold that it is not wise for any ordinary man to take issue with his race on any point of dress. He will not be the wisest of judges who shall first lay aside the venerable wig of gray horsehair. It is not expedient that a young clergyman should fly in the face of his parishioners on such a question as the wearing of a shooting-coat or a black neck-tie, or as going out with the hounds. It was not wise in John Foster, the great Baptist preacher, to horrify his simple flock by appearing in his pulpit in a gray coat and a red waistcoat. No doubt, in logic, his position was unassailable. For people who reject all clerical robes as Popish, it is manifestly absurd to make a stand for a black coat and a white neckcloth. By making a stand for these, you cut the ground from under your feet: you admit the principle which justifies satin and lawn. Let me say, a sound and reasonable principle too. It is not fitting that in every-day attire a man should conduct the worship of God's house. But even with folk who thought differently, John Foster acted unwisely. As lawyers would say, it was a bad issue to take. I know how a certain eminent essayist, whom I much revere, stands up for eccentricity. He holds it to be a useful protest against our tendency to a dead conformity. I venture to say that, generally, it is not wise to be eccentric. You find that eccentric people are usually eccentric in little things, not worth fighting about. We all know that there are great and important things in which the world thinks wrongly: take issue *there* with the world, if you like: but it is not worth while to do so in small matters of dress and behavior.

It is not worth while to take a beard into the pulpit where it will interfere with the congregation's attention to the sermon; nor to appear in the same place in lavender gloves in a country where lavender gloves, in such a locality, are unknown. It is wise to give in to the little requirements on which the world's opinion has been plainly expressed. If you are resolved to take a part of opposition to all the world, do so in the behalf of things which are worth the trouble of the strife. Let it not be engraven on your tombstone, Here lies the man who confronted the human race on the question of the wide-awake hat. Stand up for truth and right, if you are fond of fighting: you will have many opportunities in this life. Smite the flunkey, pierce the humbug, violently kick the aristocratic liar and seducer, and probably you will find abundant occupation. But though you know it is a pleasant and enjoyable thing for yourself and your children to sit on the steps of your country-house in the sunshine after breakfast, you will not gain the approval of wise men by doing the like on the steps of your town-house in a much-frequented street: say, for example, in Princes-street in Edinburgh. And though you often roll on the grass with your little boy in the country, do not attempt the like on the pavement of such a public way. For in that case it is conceivable that you may be jeered at by the passers-by, and apprehended by the police. And while you are being conveyed to the station-house, instead of being esteemed as a philosopher and revered as a martyr, it is not impossible that you may be laughed at as a fool. "We sat on the bridge, and swung our legs over the water:" with these words an eloquent writer lately began an essay. Of course, the bridge was in a quiet rural spot. If the

writer and his friend had done the like on London bridge, the small boys would have hallooed at them, and the constable would have moved them on. Yet the merits of the deed are the same in either case. Only in the one case the world says You may ; in the other case it says You must not. And the human being who resists the world's judgment in these little matters, shows, not strength, but weakness. Where principle is involved, it is noble to swing your legs ; but not otherwise. But doubtless you have remarked that it is a common thing to find great obstinacy in petty concerns in a man who has no real firmness. You will find people who are squeezable and facile in the great affairs of life, and in their larger opinions have not a mind of their own, but adopt the opinion of the last person they heard express one ; yet who persistently stick to some little absurd or bad habit which they have often been entreated to leave off, which annoys their friends, and makes them ridiculous. You will find a man whom you might turn round with a straw in his belief on any question political, moral, or literary, but who, having taken up the ground that once one is three, would go to the stake rather than give in to the world's way of thinking on that point.

I beg the reader to observe, that I do not counsel a general conformity to the appointments of his particular world, merely on the ground that non-conformity may cause him to be derided, or disliked, or suspected. I wish him to think of the injury which his non-conformity may occasion to others. If your shooting-coat, my clerical brother, however light and easy to walk in on a hot summer day, is to stand between a poor dying girl and the comfort and profit she might get from your counsels and prayers, why, I think, if you are the man

I mean, that you will determine never to go beyond your own gate but in the discomfort (often very great in country parishes) of severely clerical attire. Possibly few of my readers know that in various rural districts of Scotland a sermon, however admirable, will do no good if the preacher reads it: he must either give it extempore, or appear to do so by having previously written it and committed it to memory. "I canna thole the paper," I have heard an intelligent farmer say. He meant, he could not bear the sight of the manuscript discourse. It is fair to add that this prejudice is fast dying out, even in rural parishes; while in large towns in Scotland, it has entirely disappeared. But however unreasonable and stupid may have been the prejudice which condemned overwrought ministers to several hours weekly of the irksome school-boy labor of getting their sermons by heart, and however painful the anxiety which a man with an uncertain memory must often have felt on a Sunday morning, in the fear that he might forget what he had painfully prepared, and be reduced to a state of utter blankness, and ignominiously stick in his sermon; still, you will think that a conscientious man, earnest to do good, would make this painful sacrifice, not to his popularity, but to his usefulness. Let me confess, for myself, that I cannot imagine how the elder clergy of the Scotch Church were able to accomplish this awful toil. The father of the present writer, for thirty years, wrote and committed to memory two sermons of forty minutes each, every week; and hundreds of his brethren did the same. I could not do it, to save my life. Surely the intellectual fibre of the new generation is less muscular than that of their fathers. I have made mention of a judicious economy in giving instruction. You may

discern the result of the want of it in what we are told about a poor dying laborer, in one of the midland counties of England. It is quite unquestionable that the world goes round the sun; but it is not in the weakness of the parting hours of life that a poor uneducated man should be called to reconstruct the theory of the universe under which he had lived all his days. And though it was certainly needful to explain to the dying man the meaning of Christian faith, it might have been done without going into anything like metaphysics; and in a way in which a child of six years old might understand it, possibly as well as the parson himself. But a young parson could not see this. He would correct all the intellectual errors of his humble parishioner. He would pour upon him a flood of knowledge. Possibly you may smile at the odd expressions; but I remember few sentences which have so touched me with their hopeless pathos, as that with which the dying man feebly turned to the wall, and spoke no more. "Wut wi' faeth," he said, "and wut wi' the earth goin' round the sun, and wut wi' the railways all a-whuzzin' and a-buzzin', I'm lean muddled, confoozled, and bet!" Well, let us hope that light came at the evening-time upon that blind, benighted way.

It should be borne in mind, that as to any particular subject, there is sometimes great difficulty in ascertaining what the world (by which I mean our own particular world) is actually saying. It seems to me especially difficult to know, in a small community, what is the general opinion upon almost any matter. For you may fall in with people holding quite exceptional opinions. And external opinions are often very strongly held; and held

is possible for a very small number of persons to *get up a sough* (to use the Scotch phrase) either for or against a man. A few clacking busybodies, running about from house to house, may disseminate a vague unfavorable impression. A few hearty, active, energetic friends may cause the world's opinion, in a little place, to seem to be setting very strongly in a man's favor. You have probably heard the legend, which very likely is fabulous, of the fashion in which the blacking of a certain eminent man rose into universal fame. The eminent man hired four footmen, of loud and fluent power of expression, and of brazen countenance. He arrayed them in gorgeous liveries; the livery of each being quite different from that of the other three. Then, each alone, from morning to evening they pervaded London; and this was what they did. When each footman saw a shop in which blacking appeared likely to be sold, he rushed into it with great appearance of excitement, and exclaimed in a hurried manner, "Give me some of Snooks's blacking instantly." Snooks, it should be mentioned, was the name of his eminent employer. "Snooks's blacking," said the man in the shop; "we never heard of it!" "Not heard of Snooks's blacking!" exclaimed the footman; "why, my master won't let me brush his boots with any other; and just now he is roaring at me for brushing his boots this morning with that of Stiggins; I must be off elsewhere and get Snooks's blacking forthwith." This interview naturally startled the man in the shop; he began to think, "I must get some of Snooks's blacking; everybody must be using Snooks's blacking!" And when, in the course of the day, the other three footmen severally visited his shop as the first had done; one exclaiming, "the Chancellor won't use anything but Saooks's blacking;"

another "his Grace wont use anything but Snooks's blacking;" the last (in crimson livery), "his Majesty wont use anything but Snooks's blacking;" the man in the shop took his resolution. He found out the factory of Snooks, and ordered a large quantity of his blacking.

That which has pushed blacking into fame, has done the like for other things. Two or three individuals, vigorously puffing a book, may cause it to seem that the world's judgment in the locality where they live is in that book's favor. And most people will bow to that judgment. Not very many people have so much firmness, or confidence in themselves, as to hold their own opinion in the presence of the strongly expressed opinion of the world on the other side. And a loud and confident declaration that something is very bad, will silence and put down many people, who in their secret soul think it very good.

The *sough*, or general opinion and belief in a country district, may occasionally be got up by persons who are little better than idiots. Let me relate a story which I heard, long ago. A very distinguished preacher once went to preach in the parish church of a certain big and ugly village in Scotland. The village lies among the hills, in a pastoral district. It had no railway communication; no near neighbors; no large town within many miles. The people, many of them, were very ignorant, very pragmatistical and self-conceited. The big and ugly village thought it was the centre of the world; possibly, that it was the whole world. Its population formed an unfavorable estimate of the preaching of the great orator. It was generally said in the village that "his sermons were no' very weel connectit." It happens that the discourses of that clergyman are remarkable for their logical linkedness of thought; for the symmetry and

beauty of their skeleton, no less than for the brilliance and range of their illustrations. But some blockhead said (not having anything particular to say) that they were "no' very weel conneckit." Other blockheads grasped at this. It was something to say; and to say it seemed to imply the possession of some critical acumen. So the voice of Mrs. Grundy, in that village, reëchoed that statement on every side. The statement was, indeed, absurd. You might as well have said that the sermons were distinguished by their ignorant impatience of the relaxation of taxation, or by their want of mezzotinto. But people seized it, and repeated it. I remember going as a boy to that locality; and hearing several persons, all densely stupid, and most of them very conceited, speak of the great preacher. They all criticized him in the selfsame terms: "His sermons were no' very weel conneckit!" But there is no opinion expressed with so great confidence as the opinion of the man who is incapable of forming any opinion. I remember an old gentleman telling me how he went to hear Dr. Chalmers. "I could not understand the man," said he; "I could not see what he was driving at." I am entirely satisfied that the old gentleman told the truth. Like the Squire in the *Vicar of Wakefield*, Dr. Chalmers could supply argument, but he could not supply intellect to comprehend it.

An unfavorable *sough* may be got up in a rural district, by a man who combines caution with malignity; and all in such a way that you cannot lay hold of the malicious but cautious man. Let us suppose a new doctor is coming to the village. You, the old doctor, may go about the village and beg the people to try and receive him civilly; he may not be such a bad man after all. The truth

probably is, that nobody supposes him a bad man, or intends to receive him otherwise than civilly; but a few days judiciously spent may excite a prejudice which it will take some time to allay. Some one speaks to you in praise of an acquaintance. You may reply, in a hesitating way, "Yes; he is rather a nice fellow; but — well, I don't want to say anything bad of any one." In this way you have not committed yourself; but you have conveyed a worse impression than you could probably have conveyed by any definite charge you could have made against the man. Honest and manly folk, indeed, may possibly call you a sneak. What do you care? Some muscular Christian may kick you. In that case you will have the comfort of knowing that it unquestionably serves you right.

There is something worrying and vexatious, in thinking that the *sough of the country-side*, which in Scotland signifies the general opinion of the neighborhood, is running against yourself and your possessions; even though you heartily despise the individuals whose separate judgments go to make up that *sough*. For you gradually come to attach considerable importance to the opinion of the people among whom you live, even though that opinion be in itself worth nothing. There is compensation, however, in the fact, that if the unfavorable opinions of stupid and incompetent people are able to depress a man, the favorable opinions of stupid and incompetent people are able to elate and encourage even a very clever and wise man. Many such men are kept up to the mark at which they do good and even great things, by rumors of the high estimation in which they are held by Mrs. Grundy. There is probably as much happiness commu-

nicated to a human being by the favorable estimate of those around him — though they are people of no great standing, and not very wise — as if they were the wisest and noblest of the land. For, by degrees, even the wise man begins to fancy that these people who think so highly of him are not quite ordinary folk ; they are more capable judges of human excellence than people in their station in life usually are. I can quite understand that the author who finds his book praised in the *Little Peddlington Gazette*, or the *Whistlebinkie Banner of Freedom*, will conclude that these are important newspapers, conducted with intelligence much surpassing that of country papers in general. He will be quite cheerful for a whole forenoon after reading in either of those journals, that he is one of the most original thinkers of the age. So a clergyman, who is popular in his own parish, will quite honestly come to think that its population is remarkable for its intelligence and its power of appreciating a good sermon. Of course, as has been said, the converse case holds good. The ill opinion of those around you, if quite universal, is depressing, however much you may despise that opinion. Not only is that unfavorable estimate always around you, like an unhealthy atmosphere, but you gradually come to think that the people who hold it are rather wise and important people. A parson, going from a large and intelligent parish to one where the people are few and uncultivated, knows at first very nearly what is the mark of his present position and his present congregation. He knows that, seriously, the opinion which his parishioners form of him is neither here nor there. But he learns very soon that comfort and discomfort may be caused by judgments which are absolutely valueless. You may remember what Philip Van Arte-

velde says of that which may be regarded as the most favorable of all individual estimates of man : —

How little flattering is a woman's love! —  
Worth to the heart, come how it may, a world;  
Worth to men's measures of their own deserts,  
If weighed in wisdom's balance, merely nothing!

And gradually you go farther than Van Artevelde. Probably even that philosophic man, as he found day by day new indications of the warm affection and the hearty admiration of the woman he had in his mind when he said such words, began to think that, after all, there must be something unusual about him to elicit all that devotion ; began to think that her opinion was sound and just ; and that she must be a person of no ordinary sagacity who arrived at a judgment so true. You will do all that. You will not only be pleased by the favorable estimate of incompetent judges : you will come to think that they are very competent judges. A clergyman who at one time used to preach to a great crowd of cultivated folk in London, told me that after he had been a few months in a little country-parish, he felt quite pleased when he found the mill-girls of a manufacturing town four miles off, walking over on Sundays to hear him preach ; and also that he began to think these mill-girls very intelligent people, whose appreciation was worth having. Your "nature is subdued to what it works in." You stand in considerable awe of things amid which you always live. And the truth is, that almost everything, when you come to know it well, is bigger than the stranger fancies it. It is because things, when you come to know them, are really so good, that the *lues Boswelliana* prevails to such a degree in biographers ; that each parson thinks his own church in some one respect superior to the general run ;

and that the rustics of each parish think their own the finest in the country. The things are really very good; and it is difficult to estimate how good, relatively to others. When a wise man finds himself second, or ninth, or nineteenth, in competition with others, whether the competition be in the size of his turnips, the speed of his horses, the beauty of his pictures, the bitterness of his reviews, the amiability of his children, or the badness of his headaches (all matters of which people are given to boast), the wise man will not necessarily conclude that he himself or his belongings are less good or great than he had previously bestowed. The right conclusion is this: that other men and their belongings are better or bigger than he had fancied them. And though the favorable appreciation of judges, barristers, cabinet ministers, and the like, is undoubtedly worth more than that of factory-girls, still the favorable appreciation of the factory-girls may be regarded as worth a good deal, by one who lives exclusively among factory-girls.

Besides this, there is a further consideration that comes in to give weight to the unfavorable judgment of Mrs. Grundy. A wise man, knowing how human vanity leads people to over-estimate their own merits, would, if he found that everybody thought he was a fool, begin to fear that he was one; and also to fear that the fact that he could not see he was a fool showed the hopelessness of his condition; as we know that a mariac occasionally believes that he is the only sane person in the world. I believe that there is nothing that can hold a man up against the depressing effect of being held in little esteem by those around him, as his family, or his neighbors; but the fact of his being held in good estimation by some person or persons elsewhere, whom he can regard as wiser

and worthier judges of him than those around him are. I have known a great preacher, whose church was nearly empty on Sundays. It was in a remote rural district. But whenever he went to preach in any large town, the church in which he preached was crowded to excess. So he could set the opinion of the remote Mrs. Grundy against that of the near Mrs Grundy, and, though surrounded by the unfavorable estimation of the near Mrs. Grundy, he could retain composure and confidence in himself, by backing up his estimate of himself with that of the distant world. And there are people with no distant friends to lean on, who yet, in a remote situation, find the support and sympathy they want, in the better part of our periodical literature. The *Times*, coming daily to an educated man in a very rustic place, is a great blessing. So is the *Saturday Review* to the country parson. So are the Quarterly Reviews generally. He will find much in them with which he cannot agree; a good deal which is extremely distasteful to him. But in reading them, he breathes a different atmosphere from that in which he is placed by many of his daily concerns and acquaintances. He finds in them something to prevent him from being cowed into conformity. He finds the thoughts of cultivated men, holding the same canons of taste with himself; and, in the main, holding nearly the same great points of belief on more important things. I felt it as a comfort, after lately hearing a man say that a certain noble cathedral was "a great ugly jail of a place," to read a brilliant article in praise of Gothic architecture. And when you are building a pretty Elizabethan house, with all its graceful characteristics, you do not mind a bit that Mrs. Grundy, Mr. Snarling, and Miss Limejuice go about saying that it is gimcrack,

barbarous, Popish, inconvenient, dark, and fit only for monks and nuns, when you are able to turn to many pages on which competent men have set out the beauties and comforts of that delightful style, and shown up the nonsense of the stupid and tasteless folk who abuse it. But if you stood alone in the world in your love for the well-shown gable and the pointed arch, it may be feared that, unless you had the determination of the martyr, you would be badgered into keeping your opinions to yourself, and into conforming your practice to that of other people. There are few more delightful things to any one who has long lived among those with whom he feels no sympathy, than to find himself among people who think and feel as he does. And there is more than pleasure in the case; there is something in this that will strengthen and vivify his tastes and beliefs into redoubled energy.

You will not unfrequently find people who loudly profess their contempt for the world's opinion, who are really living in abject terror of it. A coward, you know, often assumes a bullying manner. And there is no weaker or sillier way of considering Mrs. Grundy, than to be ever on the watch for opportunities of shocking her. It is for the most part nervous people, very much afraid of her, who do this. We all know persons who take great delight in trying to astonish mankind by the awful opinions they express, and by conduct flatly opposed to the rules of civilized society. You will find parsons who in their sermons like to frighten people, by sailing as near unsound doctrine as possible; or by a manner very devoid of that gravity which becomes the time and place. So with young ladies who smoke cigars, or talk in a fast manner to gentlemen on subjects and about people of  
son

which they ought to know nothing. So with the greater part of all eccentricity. One can bear eccentricity, however great, when it is genuine. One can bear the man, however oddly he may act, who acts in Mrs. Grundy's presence as though he saw her not ; and who *bond fide* does not see her. But it is a very wretched and contemptible thing, to witness a man doing very bold things, going through all kinds of eccentric gyrations, with a side-glance all the while at Mrs. Grundy, and with an ear upon the stretch to remark what she is going to say.

There are men who are right in carefully observing the world's opinion of them and their doings : whose duty it is to observe these things carefully. There are men who know for certain that the world has an opinion of them : an opinion varying from day to day ; and an opinion upon whose variations very tangible results depend. Such a man is the Prime Minister in Britain. His possession of actual power and of profitable place depends just upon the world's opinion of him ; an opinion which ebbs and flows from week to week : which is indicated unmistakably by his parliamentary majority as it rises and sinks ; and which is affected by a host of circumstances quite away from the Premier's merits. If the Premier is desirous to retain his place, I should fancy that, till he gets indurated to it, it must be a most disagreeable one. From what a variety of quarters the voice of Mrs. Grundy must be borne to his ears ; and how difficult it must be to know precisely what importance to attach to this or that specific bellow ! Judging from the easy way in which the present head of the government bears his functions, one would suppose that to be Prime Minister must be like being stoker of an American high-pressure steamer. At

first, you will be in momentarily expectation of being blown up ; but by and by you will come to take it quite coolly ; indeed, with a hardihood rather appalling to most people to see. There is no one who has it in his power to know so certainly and immediately what his own world thinks of him, as a great actor. It is an index of his popularity, as certain as the mercury in the thermometer is of the temperature, how the theatre fills at which he performs. And to him, popularity is more than empty praise. It is substantial pudding. The bread and butter of his wife and children depend upon it. There are cases in which it is a miserable spectacle to see a man eagerly anxious about the world's opinion. There is no more contemptible and degrading sight, than a clergyman who sets his heart upon popularity as a preacher ; who is always fishing for compliments, and using claptrap arts to draw a crowd and amaze people. You come to hear of preachers who, it is plain, are prepared to go any length : men who would preach standing on their head rather than fail of creating a sensation. I thank God I never listened to such ; but I have read in print addresses described as having been given in buildings professedly used for the worship of the Almighty, which addresses, in their title, subject, and entire tone, were perfectly analogous to the advertisements and exhibitions of a juggler. Their vulgar buffoonery and disgusting profanity were intended as a bait to the lowest and worst classes in the community. You may have known persons, in various walks of life, who were in the possession of the world's good opinion, but who could not be said to be in the enjoyment of it. It did not make them happy to have it, but it would have made them miserable to lose it. To go down a peg or two in the scale of fame would

have been unendurable. And you would find them occasionally putting out feelers, to try whether the popular gale was slackening. Should it show signs of slackening, you have various acquaintances who will be careful to inform you. I knew a young divine who preached for almost the first time at a certain country church. A few days after, a man from the parish, a vulgar person, and almost a stranger, came and assured him that his sermon did not by any means *guy sahtisfawkshun*. I have known a person, a stupid and ignorant blockhead, who devoted himself to going about and retailing to every one he knew, any wretched little piece of tattle which might be disagreeable to hear. I don't believe the man was malignant. I suppose he yielded to an impulse analogous to that which makes a hen cackle when it has laid an egg. Unhappily, some men are so weak that though they find it unpleasant to be informed that the world is pronouncing opinion against them, they yet find a certain fascination impelling them to learn all particulars as to this unfriendly opinion. And so the ignorant blockhead found many attentive auditors. Doubtless this gratified him. My readers, cut such a man short at once. Snub him. Shut him up. As you would close the window through which a bitter north-east wind is blowing into your chamber on a winter day, so shut up this wretched gutter that conveys to you the dregs of Mrs. Grundy!

As you go on through life, my friend, you will discover a good many *Cowed People*. These people have been fairly beaten by their fear of what the world will say. They are always in a vague alarm. They are afraid of doing or saying the most innocent thing, lest in some way, they cannot say how, it may turn to their prejudice.

They are in mortal dread of committing themselves. They live in some general confused apprehension of what may come next. They are always thinking that Mr. A bowed rather stiffly to them, and wondering what it can mean ; that Mrs. B looked the other way as they passed, and no doubt intends to finally cut their acquaintance ; and the like. All this shades off into developments which pass the limit of sanity ; as believing that the entire population of the place have combined against them, and that the human race at large is resolved to thwart their plans and crush their hopes. I do not mention these things to be laughed at. The sincerest sympathy is due to such as suffer in this way. No doubt all this founds upon a nervous, anxious nature ; but it has been greatly fostered by lending a ready ear to such stupid, if not malicious, tattlers as have just been mentioned. There is, indeed, much of natural temperament here ; much of physical constitution. There are boys who go to school each morning, trembling with vague apprehension, they cannot say of what. Possibly there is some idea that all their companions may league against them. There is not much of the magnanimous about boys ; and such a poor little fellow probably leads a sad enough school life. And years afterwards, when he is a man in business, you may find him going away from his cottage on the outskirts into town each morning, to get his letters and attend to the day's transactions, as Daniel might have gone into the den. To many human beings the world is as a great, fierce machine, whirring and grinding inexorably on ; and their great desire is to keep away from it. And possibly the man who is most thoroughly cowed by the world is not the man who lives in an even and equable awe of it ; but rather he who now

and then rebels, makes a frantic, foolish fight for freedom, gets terribly mauled in a quarrel with the world on some stupid issue, and then gives up, and sinks down beaten into a state of utter prostration. Probably such a man, for a while after each desperate rally, is the most cowed of cowed men.

There are human beings of this temperament who seem to feel as though any street in which an acquaintance lives were barricaded against their passage. They will tell you they don't like to pass Mr. Smith's house, lest he should see them. You listen with wonder, and possibly you reply: "Suppose he does, what then?" Of course they cannot answer your question; they cannot fix on any specific evil result which would follow if Mr. Smith did happen to see them; they have simply a vague fear of the consequences of that event. You will find such people, if they are walking along the street, and see any one they know coming in their direction, instantly get out of the way by turning down some side lane. I believe that in the hunting-field the cry of "*Ware wheat!*" warns the horseman to keep off the ground sown with that precious grain, lest the crop suffer damage. I think I have seen human beings, the voice of whose whole nature, as they advanced through creation, appeared to be "*Ware Friends!*" Their wish was just to keep out of anybody's way. It was vain to ask what harm would follow even if they met Mr. Green or the Miss Browns. They did not know exactly why they were afraid: they were vaguely cowed. Is it because the present wr'ter feels within himself something which might ultimately land him in that wretched condition of moral prostration, that he is anxious to describe it accurately and protest against it bitterly? You find people so thoroughly

cowed, that they appear to be always apologizing for venturing to be in this world. They seem virtually to say to every one they meet, but especially to all baronets, lords, and the like, "I beg your pardon for being here." You will find them saying this even to wealthy mercantile men. Not only is this a painful and degrading point to arrive at; I do not hesitate to say that it is a morally wrong one. It implies a forgetfulness of Who put you in this world, my friend, that you should wish to skulk through it in that fashion. Is not *this* the right thing for a human being to feel. The Creator put me here, in my lowly place indeed; but I have as good a right in this world, in my own place in it, as the Queen or the President. My title to be here is exactly the same as that of the greatest and noblest: it is the will of my Maker. And I shall follow the advice of a good and resolute man in an early century, who was always ready to give honor to whom it was due, but who would not abnegate his rights as man, for mortal. I intend to do what he said should be done by "every man," — I intend, "wherein I am called, therein to abide with God."

There are few more contemptible exhibitions of human slavery than you may find in cowed people who, in every little thing they do, are guided not by their notion of what is right, but by their belief as to what Mrs. Grundy may say, more especially the Grundy whose income and social standing somewhat surpass their own. I once heard a parson, who had a large income, say that he could not venture to put his man-servant into livery, because the gentry in his parish would not like it! I suggested that it was no concern of the gentry how he might attire his servant; that the questions to be considered concerned only himself, and appeared to me to be these: —

1. Whether he could afford it ;
2. Whether he would like it.

And that for myself, if I could answer these questions in the affirmative, I should like to see the man in my parish who would venture to interfere with what I thought fit to do in the matter. Not but what I believe that vulgar and impertinent individuals might be found who would not like to see my friend approximating too closely to their own magnificence ; but if there be a thing in this world to be decisively and instantly snubbed, it assuredly would be the insolence of venturing to express, in my friend's presence, either liking or dislike in the case. I have known a talking busybody, a relation of Miss Limejuice, who called at the house of a family lately come to settle in a remote country region, to inform them that their dining so late as they did was regarded as presumptuous ; and that various neighboring families felt aggrieved that their own dinner-hour, hitherto esteemed the most advanced in fashion, had been transcended by the new-comers. It may suffice to say, that though the relation of Miss Limejuice was treated with entire civility, she never ventured in that house to recur to that topic again. It is curious how rapidly it comes to be understood, whether any individual possesses that cowed and abject nature which permits impertinent interference in his private concerns, or not. The most meddlesome of tattling old women knows when she may venture to repeat Mrs. Grundy's opinion, and when she had better not. And all this without the least noisy demonstration ; all this with very little reference to the absolute social position of the person to be interfered with. It is a question of the nature of the animal. An eagle, you know, is a smaller animal than a goose ; but it is inexpedient

to interfere with the former bird. If you have any unpleasant advice to offer, stick to the goose, my friend!

It is worthy of notice, that in the respect of the attitude which men assume towards the world's opinion, the most remarkable change sometimes passes over them. We all know that human beings, in the course of their lives, go through many phases of opinion and feeling as to most matters: but I think there is no single matter in which they may exhibit extremes so far apart as in the matter of confidence and cowedness. You will find men who as school-boys were remarkable for their forwardness: who were always ready to start up and roar out an answer in their class; and who even at college were pushing and confident, and quite willing to take a lead among their fellow-students; but who ten years after leaving the university, have shrunk into very modest and retiring and timid men. I have known several cases in which this was so; always in the case of men who had carried off very high honors. Doubtless this loss of confidence is in some measure the result of growing experience, and of the lowlier estimate of one's own powers which *that* seldom fails to bring to men of sense; but I believe that it is in no small measure the result of a nervous system early overdriven, and of a mental constitution from which the elasticity has been taken by too hard work, gone through too soon. You know that if you put a horse in harness at three years old, he will, if he be a good horse, do his work splendidly; but he will not do it long. At six years old, he will be a spiritless, broken-down creature. You took it out of him too soon. He is used up. And the cleverest young men at the universities are often like

the horse set to hard work at three. By the time they are two and twenty, you have sometimes taken out of them the best that will ever come. They will probably die about middle age; and till that time they will go heavily through life, with little of the cheerful spring. They will not rise to the occasion. They cannot answer the spur. They are prematurely old: weary, jaded, cowed. Oh that the vile system of midnight toil at the universities, of England and Scotland and America, were finally abolished! It directly encourages many of the most promising of the race to mortgage their best energies and their future years, to sustain the reckless expenditure of the present. It would be an invaluable blessing if it were made a law, inexorable as those of the Medes, that no honors should ever be given to any student who was not in bed by eleven o'clock at latest.

It is a sad thing when any person, old or young, goes through his work in a cowed spirit. I do not mean, goes through his work in a jaded, heartless way merely, but goes through his work in the bare hope of escaping blame. A great part of all that is done in this world is done in this way. Many children, many servants, many clerks, and even several parsons, go through their daily round thus. I need not say how poorly that work will usually be done which the man wishes just to get through without any great reprobation; but think how unhappily it will be done, and what a miserable training of mind and heart it is! It seems to me that few people do their work heartily, and really as well as they can. And people whose desire is merely to get through somehow, seem to stand to their work as at a level below it. The man who honestly does his best, works from above; his task is below him; he is master of it, however hard

it may be. The man who hopes no more than to escape censure, and who accordingly aims at nothing more, seems to work from below; his task is above him; he is cowed by it. Let us resolve that we shall always give praise when we can. You will find many people who are always willing to find fault with their servants, if their servants do anything wrong, but who never say an approving word when their servants do right. You will find many people who do the like as to their children. And only too often that wretched management breaks the spring of the youthful spirit. Yes, many little children are cowed; and the result is either a permanent dull quiescence, never to be got over, or a fierce reaction against the accursed tyranny that embittered early years—a reaction which may sometimes cast off entirely the bonds of natural affection, and even of moral restraint. How it encourages and cheers the cowed little fellow, growing up in the firm belief that he is hopelessly wicked, and never can do anything to please any one, to try reward as a change from constant punishment and bullying! I have seen the good effect upon such a one of the kind approving word. How much more cheerfully the work will be done; how much better it will be done; and how much happier a man he will be that does it! A poor fellow who never expects that he can please, and who barely hopes that he may pass without censure and abuse, will do his task very heartlessly. Let us praise warmly and heartily wherever praise is deserved. And if we weigh the matter, we shall find that a great deal of hearty praise is deserved in this world on every day that shines upon it.

May I conclude by saying, that many worthy people

go through their religious duties in a thoroughly cowed spirit? They want just to escape God's wrath — not to gain His kind favor. The great spring of conduct within them is not love, but abject terror. Truly a mistaken service! You have heard of the devil-worshippers in India; do you know why they worship the devil? Because they think him a very powerful being, who can do them a mischief if they don't. Does not the worship of the Almighty, rendered in that cowed spirit, partake of the essential nature of devil-worship? Let us not love and serve our Maker, my reader, because we are in fear that He will torment us if we do not. Let us humbly love and serve Him because He is so good, so kind to you and me, because He loved us first, and because we can see Him and His glory in the kindest face this world ever saw! I do not think we should have been afraid of Jesus of Nazareth. I do not think we need have gone in a cowed spirit to Him. And in Him we have the only manifestation that is level to our understanding, of the Invisible God. I think we could have gone to Him confidingly as a little child to a kind mother. I think we should have feared no repulse, no impatience, as we told to Him the story of all our sins and wants and cares. We can picture to ourselves, even yet, the kindly, sorrowful features which little children loved, and which drew those unsophisticated beings to gather round Him without a fear. Let there be deep humility, but nothing of that unworthy terror. You remember what we know on the best of all authority is the first and great thing we are to do. It is not to cultivate a cowed spirit. It is to LOVE our Maker with heart and soul and mind.



## CHAPTER IX.

### CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD.

**O**NCE upon a time, Mr. Smith, who was seven feet in height, went out for a walk with Mr. Brown, whose stature was three feet and a half. It was in a distant age, in which people were different from what they are now, and in which events occurred such as do not usually occur in these days. Smith and Brown, having traversed various paths, and having passed several griffins, serpents, and mail-clad knights, came at length to a certain river. It was needful that they should cross it; and the idea was suggested that they should cross it by wading. They proceeded, accordingly, to wade across; and both arrived safely at the farther side. The water was exactly four feet deep, — not an inch more or less. On reaching the other bank of the river, Mr. Brown said, —

“This is awful work; it is no joke crossing a river like *that*. I was nearly drowned.”

“Nonsense!” replied Mr. Smith; “why make a fuss about crossing a shallow stream like this? Why, the water is only four feet deep: *that* is nothing at all!”

“Nothing to you, perhaps,” was the response of Mr. Brown, “but a serious matter for me. You observe,” he went on, “that water four feet deep is just six inches

over my head. The river may be shallow to you, but it is deep to me."

Mr. Smith, like many other individuals of great physical bulk and strength, had an intellect not much adapted for comprehending subtle and difficult thoughts. He took up the ground that things are what they are in themselves, and was incapable of grasping the idea that greatness and littleness, depth and shallowness, are relative things. An altercation ensued, which resulted in threats on the part of Smith that he would throw Brown into the river; and a coolness was occasioned between the friends which subsisted for several days.

The acute mind of the reader of this page will perceive that Mr. Smith was in error; and that the principle asserted by Mr. Brown was a sound and true one. It is unquestionable that a thing which is little to one man may be great to another man. And it is just as really and certainly great in this latter case as anything ever can be. And yet, many people do a thing exactly analogous to what was done by Smith. They insist that the water which is shallow to them shall be held to be absolutely shallow; and that, if smaller men declare that it is deep to themselves, these smaller men shall be regarded as weak, fanciful, and mistaken. Many people, as they look back upon the sorrows of their own childhood, or as they look round upon the sorrows of existing childhood, think that these sorrows are or were very light and insignificant, and their causes very small. These people do this, because to them, as they are now, *big people*, (to use the expressive phrase of childhood,) these sorrows would be light, if they should befall. But though these sorrows may seem light to us now, and their causes small, it is only as water four feet in depth was shallow to the tall

Mr. Smith. The same water was very deep to the man whose stature was three feet and a half; and the peril was as great to him as could have been caused by eight feet depth of water to the man seven feet high. The little cause of trouble was great to the little child. The little heart was as full of grief and fear and bewilderment as it could hold.

Yes, I stand up against the common belief that childhood is our happiest time. And whenever I hear grown-up people say that it is so, I think of Mr. Smith and the water four feet deep. I have always, in my heart, rebelled against that common delusion. I recall, as if it were yesterday, a day which I have left behind me more than twenty years. I see a large hall, the hall of a certain educational institution, which helped to make the present writer what he is. It is the day of the distribution of the prizes. The hall is crowded with little boys, and with the relations and friends of the little boys. And the chief magistrate of that ancient town, in all the pomp of civic majesty, has distributed the prizes. It is neither here nor there what honors were borne off by me; though I remember well that *that* day was the proudest that ever had come in my short life. But I see the face and hear the voice of the kind-hearted old dignitary, who has now been for many years in his grave. And I recall especially one sentence he said, as he made a few eloquent remarks at the close of the day's proceedings.

"Ah, boys," said he, "I can tell you this is the happiest time of all your life!"

"Little you know about the matter," was my inward reply.

I knew that our worries, fears, and sorrows were just as great as those of any one else.

The sorrows of childhood and boyhood are not sorrows of that complicated and perplexing nature which sit heavy on the heart in after-years; but in relation to the little hearts that have to bear them, they are very overwhelming for the time. As has been said, great and little are quite relative terms. A weight which is not absolutely heavy is heavy to a weak person. We think an industrious flea draws a vast weight, if it draws the eighth part of an ounce. And I believe that the sorrows of childhood tax the endurance of childhood as severely as those of manhood do the endurance of the man. Yes, we look back now, and we smile at them, and at the anguish they occasioned, because they would be no great matter to us now. Yet in all this we err just as Mr. Smith the tall man erred, in that discussion with the little man, Mr. Brown. Those early sorrows were great things then. Very bitter grief may be in a very little heart. "The sports of childhood," we know from Goldsmith, "satisfy the child." The sorrows of childhood overwhelm the poor little thing. I think a sympathetic reader would hardly read without a tear, as well as a smile, an incident in the early life of Patrick Fraser Tytler, recorded in his biography. When five years old, he got hold of the gun of an elder brother and broke the spring of its lock. What anguish the little boy must have endured, what a crushing sense of having caused an irremediable evil, before he sat down and printed in great letters the following epistle to his brother, the owner of the gun: — "Oh, Jamie, think no more of guns, for the mainspring of that is broken, and *my heart is broken!*" Doubtless the poor little fellow fancied that for all the remainder of his life he never could feel as he had felt before he had touched the unlucky weapon. And looking back over many

years, most of us can remember a child crushed and overwhelmed by some trouble which it' thought could never be got over; and we can feel for our early self as though sympathizing with another being.

What I wish in this essay is, that we should look away along the path we have come in life; and that we should see, that, though many cares and troubles may now press upon us, still we may well be content. I speak to ordinary people, whose lot has been an ordinary lot. I know there are exceptional cases; but I firmly believe, that, as for most of us, we never have seen better days than these. No doubt, in the retrospect of early youth, we seem to see a time when the summer was brighter, the flowers sweeter, the snowy days of winter more cheerful, than we ever find them now. But, in sober sense, we know that it is all an illusion. It is only as the man travelling over the burning desert sees sparkling water and shady trees where he knows there is nothing but arid sand.

I dare say you know that one of the acutest of living men has maintained that it is foolish to grieve over past suffering. He says, truly enough in one sense, that the suffering which is past is as truly non-existent as the suffering which has never been at all; that, in fact, past suffering is now nothing, and is entitled to no more consideration than that to which nothing is entitled. No doubt, when bodily pain has ceased, it is all over: we do not feel it any more. And you have probably observed that the impression left by bodily pain passes very quickly away. The sleepless night, or the night of torment from toothache, which seemed such a distressing reality while it was dragging over, looks a very shadowy thing the next forenoon. But it may be doubted whether you

will ever so far succeed in overcoming the fancies and weaknesses of humanity as to get people to cease to feel that past sufferings and sorrows are a great part of their present life. The remembrance of our past life is a great part of our present life. And, indeed, the greater part of human suffering consists in its anticipation and in its recollection. It is so by the inevitable law of our being. It is because we are rational creatures that it is so. We cannot help looking forward to that which is coming, and looking back on that which is past; nor can we suppress, as we do so, an emotion corresponding to the perception. There is not the least use in telling a little boy who knows that he is to have a tooth pulled out to-morrow, that it is absurd in him to make himself unhappy to-night through the anticipation of it. You may show with irrefragable force of reason, that the pain will last only for the two or three seconds during which the tooth is being wrenched from its place, and that it will be time enough to vex himself about the pain when he has actually to feel it. But the little fellow will pass but an unhappy night in the dismal prospect; and by the time the cold iron lays hold of the tooth, he will have endured by anticipation a vast deal more suffering than the suffering of the actual operation. It is so with bigger people, looking forward to greater trials. And it serves no end whatever to prove that all this ought not to be. The question as to the emotions turned off in the workings of the human mind is one of fact. It is not how the machine ought to work, but how the machine does work. And as with the anticipation of suffering, so with its retrospect. The great grief which is past, even though its consequences no longer directly press upon us, casts its shadow over after-years. There are, indeed, some hardships and trials upon

250 CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD.

which it is possible that we may look back with satisfaction. The contrast with them enhances the enjoyment of better days. But these trials, it seems to me, must be such as come through the direct intervention of Providence; and they must be clear of the elements of human cruelty or injustice. I do not believe that a man who was a weakly and timid boy can ever look back with pleasure upon the ill-usage of the brutal bully of his school-days, or upon the injustice of his teacher in cheating him out of some well-earned prize. There are kinds of great suffering which can never be thought of without present suffering, so long as human nature continues what it is. And I believe that past sorrows are a great reality in our present life, and exert a great influence over our present life, whether for good or ill. As you may see in the trembling knees of some poor horse, in its drooping head, and spiritless paces, that it was overwrought when young: so, if the human soul were a thing that could be seen, you might discern the scars where the iron entered into it long ago, — you might trace not merely the enduring remembrance, but the enduring results, of the incapacity and dishonesty of teachers, the heartlessness of companions, and the idiotic folly and cruelty of parents. No, it will not do to tell us that past sufferings have ceased to exist, while their remembrance continues so vivid, and their results so great. You are not done with the bitter frosts of last winter, though it be summer now, if your blighted evergreens remain as their result and memorial. And the man who was brought up in an unhappy home in childhood will never feel that that unhappy home has ceased to be a present reality, if he knows that its whole discipline fostered in him a spirit of distrust in his kind which is not yet entirely got over, and made

him set himself to the work of life with a heart somewhat soured and prematurely old. The past is a great reality. We are here the living embodiment of all we have seen and felt through all our life, — fashioned into our present form by millions of little touches, and by none with a more real result than the hours of sorrow we have known.

One great cause of the suffering of boyhood is the bullying of bigger boys at school. I know nothing practically of the English system of *fagging* at public schools, but I am not prepared to join out and out in the cry against it. I see many evils inherent in the system ; but I see that various advantages may result from it, too. To organize a recognized subordination of lesser boys to bigger ones must unquestionably tend to cut the ground from under the feet of the unrecognized, unauthorized, private bully. But I know that at large schools, where there is no fagging, bullying on the part of youthful tyrants prevails to a great degree. Human nature is beyond doubt fallen. The systematic cruelty of a school-bully to a little boy is proof enough of *that*, and presents one of the very hatefulest phases of human character. It is worthy of notice, that, as a general rule, the higher you ascend in the social scale among boys, the less of bullying there is to be found. Something of the chivalrous and the magnanimous comes out in the case of the sons of gentlemen : it is only among such that you will ever find a boy, not personally interested in the matter, standing up against the bully in the interest of right and justice. I have watched a big boy thrashing a little one, in the presence of half a dozen other big boys, not one of whom interfered on behalf of the oppressed little fel-

low. You may be sure I did not watch the transaction longer than was necessary to ascertain whether there was a grain of generosity in the hulking boors; and you may be sure, too, that that thrashing of the little boy was, to the big bully, one of the most unfortunate transactions in which he had engaged in his bestial and blackguard, though brief, life. *I* took care of *that*, you may rely on it. And I favored the bully's companions with my sentiments as to their conduct, with an energy of statement that made them sneak off, looking very like whipped spaniels. My friendly reader, let us never fail to stop a bully, when we can. And we very often can. Among the writer's possessions might be found by the curious inspector several black kid gloves, no longer fit for use, though apparently not very much worn. Surveying these integuments minutely, you would find the thumb of the right hand rent away, beyond the possibility of mending. Whence the phenomenon? It comes of the writer's determined habit of stopping the bully. Walking along the street, or the country-road, I occasionally see a big blackguard fellow thrashing a boy much less than himself. I am well aware that some prudent individuals would pass by on the other side, possibly addressing an admonition to the big blackguard. But I approve Thomson's statement, that "prudence to baseness verges still;" and I follow a different course. Suddenly approaching the blackguard, by a rapid movement, generally quite unforeseen by him, I take him by the arm, and occasionally (let me confess) by the neck, and shake him till his teeth rattle. This, being done with a new glove on the right hand, will generally unfit that glove for further use. For the bully must be taken with a gripe so firm and sudden as shall serve to paralyze

his nervous system for the time. And never once have I found the bully fail to prove a whimpering coward. The punishment is well deserved, of course; and it is a terribly severe one in ordinary cases. It is a serious thing, in the estimation both of the bully and his companions, that he should have so behaved as to have drawn on himself the notice of a passer-by, and especially of a parson. The bully is instantly cowed; and by a few words to any of his school-associates who may be near, you can render him unenviably conspicuous among them for a week or two. I never permit bullying to pass unchecked; and so long as my strength and life remain, I never will. I trust you never will. If you could stand coolly by, and see the cruelty you could check, or the wrong you could right, and move no finger to do it, you are not the reader I want, nor the human being I choose to know. I hold the cautious and sagacious man, who can look on at an act of bullying without stopping it and punishing it, as a worse and more despicable animal than the bully himself.

Of course, you must interfere with judgment; and you must follow up your interference with firmness. Don't intermeddle, like Don Quixote, in such a manner as to make things worse. It is only in the case of continued and systematic cruelty that it is worth while to work temporary aggravation, to the end of ultimate and entire relief. And sometimes that is unavoidable. You remember how, when Moses made his application to Pharaoh for release to the Hebrews, the first result was the aggravation of their burdens. The supply of straw was cut off, and the tale of bricks was to remain the same as before. It could not be helped. And though things came right at last, the immediate consequence was

254 CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD.

that the Hebrews turned in bitterness on their intending deliverer, and charged their aggravated sufferings upon him. Now, my friend, if you set yourself to the discomfiture of a bully, see you do it effectually. If needful, follow up your first shaking. Find out his master, find out his parents; let the fellow see distinctly that your interference is no passing fancy. Make him understand that you are thoroughly determined that his bullying shall cease. And carry out your determination unflinchingly.

I frequently see the boys of a certain large public school, which is attended by boys of the better class; and judging from their cheerful and happy aspect, I judge that bullying among boys of that condition is becoming rare. Still, I doubt not, there yet are poor little nervous fellows whose school-life is embittered by it. I don't think any one could read the poet Cowper's account of how he was bullied at school, without feeling his blood a good deal stirred, if not entirely boiling. If I knew of such a case within a good many miles, I should stop it, though I never wore a glove again that was not split across the right palm.

But, doubtless, the greatest cause of the sorrows of childhood is the mismanagement and cruelty of parents. You will find many parents who make favorites of some of their children to the neglect of others: an error and a sin which is bitterly felt by the children who are held down, and which can never by possibility result in good to any party concerned. And there are parents who deliberately lay themselves out to torment their children. There are two classes of parents who are the most inexorably cruel and malignant: it is hard to say which

class excels, but it is certain that both classes exceed all ordinary mortals. One is the utterly blackguard: the parents about whom there is no good nor pretence of good. The other is the wrongheadedly conscientious and religious: probably, after all, there is greater rancor and malice about these last than about any other. These act upon a system of unnatural repression, and systematized weeding out of all enjoyment from life. These are the people whose very crowning act of hatred and malice towards any one is to pray for him, or to threaten to pray for him. These are the people who, if their children complain of their bare and joyless life, say that such complaints indicate a wicked heart, or Satanic possession; and have recourse to further persecution to bring about a happier frame of mind. Yes: the wrong-headed and wrong-hearted religionist is probably the very worst type of man or woman on whom the sun looks down. And, oh! how sad to think of the fashion in which stupid, conceited, malicious blockheads set up their own worst passions as the fruits of the working of the Blessed Spirit, and caricature, to the lasting injury of many a young heart, the pure and kindly religion of the Blessed Redeemer! These are the folk who inflict systematic and ingenious torment on their children: and, unhappily, a very contemptible parent can inflict much suffering on a sensitive child. But of this there is more to be said hereafter; and before going on to it, let us think of another evil influence which darkens and embitters the early years of many.

It is the cruelty, injustice, and incompetence of many schoolmasters. I know a young man of twenty-eight, who told me, that, when at school in a certain large city in Peru, (let us say,) he never went into his class any

day without feeling quite sick with nervous terror. The entire class of boys lived in that state of cowed submission to a vulgar, stupid, bullying, flogging barbarian. If it prevents the manners from becoming brutal diligently to study the ingenuous arts, it appears certain that diligently to teach them sometimes leads to a directly contrary result. The bullying schoolmaster has now become an almost extinct animal; but it is not very long since the spirit of Mr. Squeers was to be found, in its worst manifestations, far beyond the precincts of Dotheboys Hall. You would find fellows who showed a grim delight in walking down a class with a cane in their hand, enjoying the evident fear they occasioned as they swung it about, occasionally coming down with a savage whack on some poor fellow who was doing nothing whatsoever. These brutal teachers would flog, and that till compelled to cease by pure exhaustion, not merely for moral offences, which possibly deserve it, (though I do not believe any one was ever made better by flogging,) but for making a mistake in saying a lesson, which the poor boy had done his best to prepare, and which was driven out of his head by the fearful aspect of the truculent blackguard with his cane and his hoarse voice. And how indignant, in after-years, many a boy of the last generation must have been, to find that this tyrant of his childhood was in truth a humbug, a liar, a fool, and a sneak! Yet how that miserable piece of humanity was feared! How they watched his eye, and laughed at the old idiot's wretched jokes! I have several friends who have told me such stories of their school-days, that I used to wonder that they did not, after they became men, return to the school-boy spot that they might heartily shake their preceptor of other years, or even kick him!

If there be a thing to be wondered at, it is that the human race is not much worse than it is. It has not a fair chance. I am not thinking now of an original defect in the material provided: I am thinking only of the kind of handling it gets. I am thinking of the amount of judgment which may be found in most parents and in most teachers, and of the degree of honesty which may be found in many. I suppose there is no doubt that the accursed system of the cheap Yorkshire schools was by no means caricatured by Mr. Dickens in "Nicholas Nickleby." I believe that starvation and brutality were the rule at these institutions. And I do not think it says much for the manliness of Yorkshire men and of Yorkshire clergymen, that these foul dens of misery and wickedness were suffered to exist so long without a voice raised to let the world know of them. I venture to think, that, if Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh had lived anywhere near Greta Bridge, Mr. Squeers and his compeers would have attained a notoriety that would have stopped their trade. I cannot imagine how any one, with the spirit of a man in him, could sleep and wake within sight of one of these schools without lifting a hand or a voice to stop what was going on there. But without supposing these extreme cases, I can remember what I have myself seen of the incompetence and injustice of teachers. I burn with indignation yet, as I think of a malignant blockhead who once taught me for a few months. I have been at various schools; and I spent six years at one venerable university (where my instructors were wise and worthy); and I am now so old, that I may say, without any great exhibition of vanity, that I have always kept well up among my school and college companions: but that blockhead kept me steadily at the bottom of my class, and kept a

frightful dunce at the top of it, by his peculiar system. I have observed (let me say) that masters and professors who are stupid themselves have a great preference for stupid fellows, and like to keep down clever ones. A professor who was himself a dunce at college, and who has been jobbed into his chair, being quite unfit for it, has a fellow-feeling for other dunces. He is at home with them, you see, and is not afraid that they see through him and despise him. The injustice of the malignant blockhead who was my early instructor, and who succeeded in making several months of my boyhood unhappy enough, was taken up and imitated by several lesser blockheads among the boys. I remember particularly one sneaking wretch who was occasionally set to mark down on a slate the names of such boys as talked in school; such boys being punished by being turned to the bottom of their class. I remember how that sneaking wretch used always to mark my name down, though I kept perfectly silent: and how he put my name last on the list, that I might have to begin the lesson the very lowest in my form. The sneaking wretch was bigger than I, so I could not thrash him; and any representation I made to the malignant blockhead of a schoolmaster was entirely disregarded. I cannot think but with considerable ferocity, that probably there are many schools to-day in Britain containing a master who has taken an unreasonable dislike to some poor boy, and who lays himself out to make that poor boy unhappy. And I know that such may be the case where the boy is neither bad nor stupid. And if the school be one attended by a good many boys of the lower grade, there are sure to be several sneaky boys among them who will devote themselves to tormenting the one whom the master hates and torments.

It cannot be denied that there is a generous and magnanimous tone about the boys of a school attended exclusively by the children of the better classes, which is unknown among the children of uncultivated boors. I have observed, that, if you offer a prize to the cleverest and most industrious boy of a certain form in a school of the upper class, and propose to let the prize be decided by the votes of the boys themselves, you will almost invariably find it fairly given: that is, given to the boy who deserves it best. If you explain, in a frank, manly way, to the little fellows, that, in asking each for whom he votes, you are asking each to say upon his honor whom he thinks the cleverest and most diligent boy in the form, nineteen boys out of twenty will answer honestly. But I have witnessed the signal failure of such an appeal to the honor of the bumpkins of a country-school. I was once present at the examination of such a school, and remarked carefully how the boys acquitted themselves. After the examination was over, the master proposed, very absurdly, to let the boys of each class vote the prize for that particular class. The voting began. A class of about twenty was called up: I explained to the boys what they were to do. I told them they were not to vote for the boy they liked best, but were to tell me faithfully who had done best in the class-lessons. I then asked the first boy in the line for whom he gave his vote. To my mortification, instead of voting for a little fellow who had done incomparably best at the examination, he gave his vote for a big sullen-looking blockhead who had done conspicuously ill. I asked the next boy, and received the same answer. So all round the class: all voted for the big sullen-looking blockhead. One or two did not give their

votes quite promptly ; and I could discern a threatening glance cast at them by the big sullen-looking blockhead, and an ominous clinching of the blockhead's right fist. I went round the class without remark ; and the blockhead made sure of the prize. Of course this would not do. The blockhead could not be suffered to get the prize ; and it was expedient that he should be made to remember the occasion on which he had sought to tamper with justice and right. Addressing the blockhead, amid the dead silence of the school, I said : " You shall not get the prize, because I can judge for myself that you don't deserve it. I can see that you are the stupidest boy in the class ; and I have seen reason, during this voting, to believe that you are the worst. You have tried to bully these boys into voting for you. Their votes go for nothing ; for their voting for you proves either that they are so stupid as to think you deserve the prize, or so dishonest as to say they think so when they don't think so." Then I inducted the blockhead into a seat where I could see him well, and proceeded to take the votes over again. I explained to the boys once more what they had to do ; and explained that any boy would be telling a lie who voted the prize unfairly. I also told them that I knew who deserved the prize, and that they knew it too, and that they had better vote fairly. Then, instead of saying to each boy, " For whom do you vote ? " I said to each, " Tell me who did best in the class during these months past." Each boy in reply named the boy who really deserved the prize : and the little fellow got it. I need not record the means I adopted to prevent the sullen-looking blockhead from carrying out his purpose of thrashing the little fellow. It may suffice to say that the means were thoroughly

effectual ; and that the blockhead was very meek and tractable for about six weeks after that memorable day.

But, after all, the great cause of the sorrows of childhood is unquestionably the mismanagement of parents. You hear a great deal about parents who spoil their children by excessive kindness ; but I venture to think that a greater number of children are spoiled by stupidity and cruelty on the part of their parents. You may find parents who, having started from a humble origin, have attained to wealth, and who, instead of being glad to think that their children are better off than they themselves were, exhibit a diabolical jealousy of their children. You will find such wretched beings insisting that their children shall go through needless trials and mortifications, because they themselves went through the like. Why, I do not hesitate to say that one of the thoughts which would most powerfully lead a worthy man to value material prosperity would be the thought that his boys would have a fairer and happier start in life than he had, and would be saved the many difficulties on which he still looks back with pain. You will find parents, especially parents of the pharisaical and wrong-headed religious class, who seem to hold it a sacred duty to make the little things unhappy ; who systematically endeavor to render life as bare, ugly, and wretched a thing as possible ; who never praise their children when they do right, but punish them with great severity when they do wrong ; who seem to hate to see their children lively or cheerful in their presence ; who thoroughly repel all sympathy or confidence on the part of their children, and then mention as a proof that their children are possessed by the Devil, that their children

## 262 CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD.

always like to get away from them ; who rejoice to cut off any little enjoyment, — rigidly carrying out into practice the fundamental principle of their creed, which undoubtedly is, that “nobody should ever please himself, neither should anybody ever please anybody else, because in either case he is sure to displease God.” No doubt, Mr. Buckle, in his second volume, caricatured and misrepresented the religion of Scotland as a country ; but he did not in the least degree caricature or misrepresent the religion of some people in Scotland. The great doctrine underlying all other doctrines, in the creed of a few unfortunate beings, is, that God is spitefully angry to see his creatures happy ; and of course the practical lesson follows, that they are following the best example, when they are spitefully angry to see their children happy.

Then a great trouble, always pressing heavily on many a little mind, is that it is overtasked with lessons. You still see here and there idiotic parents striving to make infant phenomena of their children, and recording with much pride how their children could read and write at an unnaturally early age. Such parents are fools : not necessarily malicious fools, but fools beyond question. The great use to which the first six or seven years of life should be given is the laying the foundation of a healthful constitution in body and mind ; and the instilling of those first principles of duty and religion which do not need to be taught out of any books. Even if you do not permanently injure the young brain and mind by prematurely overtasking them, — even if you do not permanently blight the bodily health and break the mind’s cheerful spring, you gain nothing. Your child at fourteen years old is not a bit farther advanced

in his education than a child who began his years after him ; and the entire result of your stupid driving has been to overcloud some days which should have been among the happiest of his life. It is a woful sight to me to see the little forehead corrugated with mental effort, though the effort be to do no more than master the multiplication table : it was a sad story I lately heard of a little boy repeating his Latin lesson over and over again in the delirium of the fever of which he died, and saying piteously that indeed he could not do it better. I don't like to see a little face looking unnaturally anxious and earnest about a horrible task of spelling ; and even when children pass that stage, and grow up into school-boys who can read Thucydides and write Greek iambics, it is not wise in parents to stimulate a clever boy's anxiety to hold the first place in his class. That anxiety is strong enough already ; it needs rather to be repressed. It is bad enough even at college to work on late into the night ; but at school it ought not to be suffered for one moment. If a lad takes his place in his class every day in a state of nervous tremor, he may be in the way to get his gold medal, indeed ; but he is in the way to shatter his constitution for life.

We all know, of course, that children are subjected to worse things than these. I think of little things early set to hard work, to add a little to their parent's scanty store. Yet, if it be only work, they bear it cheerfully. This afternoon, I was walking through a certain quiet street, when I saw a little child standing with a basket at a door. The little man looked at various passers-by ; and I am happy to say, that, when he saw me, he asked me to ring the door-bell for him : for, though he had been sent with that basket, which was not a light one, he

264 CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD.

could not reach up to the bell. I asked him how old he was. "Five years past," said the child, quite cheerfully and independently. "God help you, poor little man!" I thought; "the doom of toil has fallen early upon you!" If you visit much among the poor, few things will touch you more than the unnatural sagacity and trustworthiness of children who are little more than babies. You will find these little things left in a bare room by themselves, — the eldest six years old, — while the poor mother is out at her work. And the eldest will reply to your questions in a way that will astonish you, till you get accustomed to such things. I think that almost as heart-rending a sight as you will readily see is the misery of a little thing who has spilt in the street the milk she was sent to fetch, or broken a jug, and who is sitting in despair beside the spilt milk or the broken fragments. Good Samaritan, never pass by such a sight; bring out your twopence; set things completely right: a small matter and a kind word will cheer and comfort an overwhelmed heart. That child has a truculent step-mother, or (alas!) mother, at home, who would punish that mishap as nothing should be punished but the gravest moral delinquency. And lower down the scale than this, it is awful to see want, cold, hunger, rags, in a little child. I have seen the wee thing shuffling along the pavement in great men's shoes, holding up its sorry tatters with its hands, and casting on the passengers a look so eager, yet so hopeless, as went to one's heart. Let us thank God that there is one large city in the empire where you need never see such a sight, and where, if you do, you know how to relieve it effectually; and let us bless the name and the labors and the genius of Thomas Guthrie! It is a sad thing to see the toys of such little children as I can think of. What

curious things they are able to seek amusement in! I have known a brass button at the end of a string a much prized possession. I have seen a grave little boy standing by a broken chair in a bare garret, solemnly arranging and rearranging two pins upon the broken chair. A machine much employed by poor children in country-places is a slate tied to a bit of string: this, being drawn along the road, constitutes a cart; and you may find it attended by the admiration of the entire young population of three or four cottages standing in the moorland miles from any neighbor.

You will not unfrequently find parents who, if they cannot keep back their children from some little treat, will try to infuse a sting into it, so as to prevent the children from enjoying it. They will impress on their children that they must be very wicked to care so much about going out to some children's party; or they will insist that their children should return home at some preposterously early hour, so as to lose the best part of the fun, and so as to appear ridiculous in the eyes of their young companions. You will find this amiable tendency in people intrusted with the care of older children. I have heard of a man whose nephew lived with him, and lived a very cheerless life. When the season came round at which the lad hoped to be allowed to go and visit his parents, he ventured, after much hesitation, to hint this to his uncle. Of course the uncle felt that it was quite right the lad should go, but he grudged him the chance of the little enjoyment, and the happy thought struck him that he might let the lad go, and at the same time make the poor fellow uncomfortable in going. Accordingly he conveyed his permission to the lad to go by roaring out

in a savage manner, "*Begone!*" This made the poor lad feel as if it were his duty to stay, and as if it were very wicked in him to wish to go; and though he ultimately went, he enjoyed his visit with only half a heart. There are parents and guardians who take great pains to make their children think themselves very bad,—to make the little things grow up in the endurance of the pangs of a bad conscience. For conscience, in children, is a quite artificial thing: you may dictate to it what it is to say. And parents, often injudicious, sometimes malignant, not seldom apply hard names to their children, which sink down into the little heart and memory far more deeply than they think. If a child cannot eat fat, you may instil into him that it is because he is so wicked; and he will believe you for a while. A favorite weapon in the hands of some parents, who have devoted themselves diligently to making their children miserable, is to frequently predict to the children the remorse which they (the children) will feel after they (the parents) are dead. In such cases, it would be difficult to specify the precise things which the children are to feel remorseful about. It must just be, generally, because they were so wicked, and because they did not sufficiently believe the infallibility and impeccability of their ancestors. I am reminded of the woman mentioned by Sam Weller, whose husband disappeared. The woman had been a fearful termagant; the husband, a very inoffensive man. After his disappearance, the woman issued an advertisement, assuring him, that, if he returned, he would be fully forgiven; which, as Mr. Weller justly remarked, was very generous, seeing he had never done anything at all.

Yes, the conscience of children is an artificial and a sensitive thing. The other day, a friend of mine, who is

one of the kindest of parents and the most amiable of men, told me what happened in his house on a certain *Fast-day*. A Scotch *Fast-day*, you may remember, is the institution which so completely puzzled Mr. Buckle. That historian fancied that *to fast* means in Scotland to abstain from food. Had Mr. Buckle known anything whatever about Scotland, he would have known that a Scotch *Fast-day* means a week-day on which people go to church, but on which (especially in the dwellings of the clergy) there is a better dinner than usual. I never knew man or woman in all my life who on a *Fast-day* refrained from eating. And quite right, too. The growth of common sense has gradually abolished literal fasting. In a warm Oriental climate, abstinence from food may give the mind the preëminence over the body, and so leave the mind better fitted for religious duties. In our country, literal fasting would have just the contrary effect: it would give the body the mastery over the soul; it would make a man so physically uncomfortable that he could not attend with profit to his religious duties at all. I am aware, Anglican reader, of the defects of my countrymen; but commend me to the average Scotchman for sound practical sense. But to return. These *Fast-days* are by many people observed as rigorously as the Scotch Sunday. On the forenoon of such a day, my friend's little child, three years old, came to him in much distress. She said, as one who had a fearful sin to confess, "I have been playing with my toys this morning;" and then began to cry as if her little heart would break. I know some stupid parents who would have strongly encouraged this needless sensitiveness; and who would thus have made their child unhappy at the time, and prepared the way for an indignant bursting of these artificial tram

mels when the child had grown up to maturity. But my friend was not of that stamp. He comforted the little thing, and told her, that, though it might be as well not to play with her toys on a Fast-day, what she had done was nothing to cry about. I think, my reader, that, even if you were a Scotch minister, you would appear with considerable confidence before your Judge, if you had never done worse than failed to observe a Scotch Fast-day with the Covenanting austerity.

But when one looks back and looks round and tries to reckon up the sorrows of childhood arising from parental folly, one feels that the task is endless. There are parents who will not suffer their children to go to the little feasts which children occasionally have, either on that wicked principle that all enjoyment is sinful, or because the children have recently committed some small offence, which is to be thus punished. There are parents who take pleasure in informing strangers, in their children's presence, about their children's faults, to the extreme bitterness of the children's hearts. There are parents who will not allow their children to be taught dancing, regarding dancing as sinful. The result is, that the children are awkward and unlike other children; and when they are suffered to spend an evening among a number of companions who have all learned dancing, they suffer a keen mortification which older people ought to be able to understand. Then you will find parents, possessing ample means, who will not dress their children like others, but send them out in very shabby garments. Few things cause a more painful sense of humiliation to a child. It is a sad sight to see a little fellow hiding round the corner when some one passes who is likely to recognize him, afraid to go through the

decent streets, and creeping out of sight by back-ways. We have all seen *that*. We have all sympathized heartily with the reduced widow who has it not in her power to dress her boy better ; and we have all felt lively indignation at the parents who had the power to attire their children becomingly, but whose heartless parsimony made the little things go about under a constant sense of painful degradation.

An extremely wicked way of punishing children is by shutting them up in a dark place. Darkness is naturally fearful to human beings, and the stupid ghost-stories of many nurses make it especially fearful to a child. It is a stupid and wicked thing to send a child on an errand in a dark night. I do not remember passing through a greater trial in my youth than once walking three miles alone (it was not going on an errand) in the dark, along a road thickly shaded with trees. I was a little fellow ; but I got over the distance in half an hour. Part of the way was along the wall of a church-yard, one of those ghastly, weedy, neglected, accursed-looking spots where stupidity has done what it can to add circumstances of disgust and horror to the Christian's long sleep. Nobody ever supposed that this walk was a trial to a boy of twelve years old : so little are the thoughts of children understood. And children are reticent : I am telling now about that dismal walk for the very first time. And in the illnesses of childhood, children sometimes get very close and real views of death. I remember, when I was nine years old, how every evening, when I lay down to sleep, I used for about a year to picture myself lying dead, till I felt as though the coffin were closing round me. I used to read at that period, with a curious feeling of fascination, Blair's poem, "The Grave." But I never dreamed

of telling anybody about these thoughts. I believe that thoughtful children keep most of their thoughts to themselves, and in respect of the things of which they think most are as profoundly alone as the Ancient Mariner in the Pacific. I have heard of a parent, an important member of a very strait sect of the Pharisees, whose child, when dying, begged to be buried not in a certain foul old hideous church-yard, but in a certain cheerful cemetery. This request the poor little creature made with all the energy of terror and despair. But the strait Pharisee refused the dying request, and pointed out, with polemical bitterness, to the child, that he must be very wicked indeed to care at such a time where he was to be buried, or what might be done with his body after death. How I should enjoy the spectacle of that unnatural, heartless, stupid wretch tarred and feathered! The dying child was caring for a thing about which Shakespeare cared; and it was not in mere human weakness, but "by faith," that "Joseph, when he was a-dying, gave commandment concerning his bones."

I believe that real depression of spirits, usually the sad heritage of after-years, is often felt in very early youth. It sometimes comes of the child's belief that he must be very bad, because he is so frequently told that he is so. It sometimes comes of the child's fears, early felt, as to what is to become of him. His parents, possibly, with the good sense and kind feeling which distinguish various parents, have taken pains to drive it into the child, that, if his father should die, he will certainly starve, and may very probably have to become a wandering beggar. And these sayings have sunk deep into the little heart. I remember how a friend told me that his constant wonder when he was twelve or thirteen years old, was *this*: If

life was such a burden already, and so miserable to look back upon, how could he ever bear it when he had grown older?

But now, my reader, I am going to stop. I have a great deal more marked down to say, but the subject is growing so thoroughly distressing to me, as I go on, that I shall go on no farther. It would make me sour and wretched for the next week, if I were to state and illustrate the varied sorrows of childhood of which I intended yet to speak: and if I were to talk out my heart to you about the people who cause these, I fear my character for good-nature would be gone with you for ever. "This genial writer," as the newspapers call me, would show but little geniality: I am aware, indeed, that I have already been writing in a style which, to say the least, is snappish. So I shall say nothing of the first death that comes in the family in our childish days, — its hurry, its confusion, its awe-struck mystery, its wonderfully vivid recalling of the words and looks of the dead; nor of the terrible trial to a little child of being sent away from home to school, — the heart-sickness and the weary counting of the weeks and days before the time of returning home again. But let me say to every reader who has it in his power directly or indirectly to do so, Oh, do what you can to make children happy! oh, seek to give that great enduring blessing of a happy youth! Whatever after-life may prove, let there be something bright to look back upon in the horizon of their early time! You may sour the human spirit forever, by cruelty and injustice in youth. There is a past suffering which exalts and purifies; but *this* leaves only an evil result: it darkens all the world, and all our views of it. Let us try to make every little

272 CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD.

child happy. The most selfish parent might try to please a little child, if it were only to see the fresh expression of unblinded feeling, and a liveliness of pleasurable emotion which in after-years we shall never know. I do not believe a great English barrister is so happy when he has the Great Seal committed to him as two little and rather ragged urchins whom I saw this very afternoon. I was walking along a country-road, and overtook them. They were about five years old. I walked slower, and talked to them for a few minutes, and found that they were good boys, and went to school every day. Then I produced two coins of the copper coinage of Britain: one a large penny of ancient days, another a small penny of the present age. "There is a penny for each of you," I said, with some solemnity: "one is large, you see, and the other small; but they are each worth exactly the same. Go and get something good." I wish you had seen them go off! It is a cheap and easy thing to make a little heart happy. May this hand never write another essay if it ever wilfully miss the chance of doing so! It is all quite right in after-years to be careworn and sad. We understand these matters ourselves. Let others bear the burden which we ourselves bear, and which is doubtless good for us. But the poor little things! I can enter into the feeling of a kind-hearted man who told me that he never could look at a number of little children but the tears came into his eyes. How much these young creatures have to bear yet! I think you can, as you look at them, in some degree understand and sympathize with the Redeemer, who, when he "saw a great multitude, was moved with compassion toward them!" Ah, you smooth little face, (you may think,) I know what years will make of you, if they find you in this world!

CONCERNING THE SORROWS OF CHILDHOOD. 273

And you, light little heart, will know your weight of care!

And I remember, as I write these concluding lines, who they were that the Best and Kindest this world ever saw liked to have near Him; and what the reason was He gave why He felt most in His element when they were by His side. He wished to have little children round Him, and would not have them chidden away; and this because there was something about them that reminded Him of the Place from which He came. He liked the little faces and the little voices, — He to whom the wisest are in understanding as children. And oftentimes, I believe, these little ones still do His work. Oftentimes, I believe, when the worn man is led to Him in childlike confidence, it is by the hand of a little child.



## CHAPTER X.

### THE ORGAN QUESTION IN SCOTLAND.<sup>1</sup>

**R**EPUBLICANS are born, not made," says the lively author of *Kaloolah*; and so, we have long held, are true-blue Presbyterians. A certain preponderance of the sterner elements, a certain lack of capacity of emotion, and disregard of the influence of associations, — in brief, a certain hardness of character to be found only in Scotland, is needed to make your out-and-out follower of John Knox. The great mass of the educated members of the Church of Scotland have no pretension to the name of true-blue Presbyterians: Balfour of Burley would have scouted them; under the insidious influence of greater enlightenment and more rapid communication, they have in many respects approximated sadly to "black prelaacy." Dr. Candlish's book reminds us that out-and-out Presbyterians are still to be found in the northern part of this island. In arguing with such, we feel a peculiar difficulty. We have no ground in common. Things which appear to us as self-evident axioms, they flatly deny. For instance, it appears

<sup>1</sup> *The Organ Question: Statements by Dr. Ritchie and Dr. Porteous for and against the use of the Organ in Public Worship, in the Proceedings of the Presbytery of Glasgow, 1807-8. With an introductory Notice, by Robert S. Candlish, D.D. Edinburgh. 1856.*

to us just as plain as that two and two make four, that a church should be something essentially different in appearance from an ordinary dwelling; that there is a peculiar sanctity about the house of God; that if it be fit to pay some respect to the birthday of the Queen, it cannot be wrong to pay a greater to the birthday of the Redeemer; that the worship of God should be made as solemn in itself as possible, and as likely as possible to impress the hearts of the worshippers; that if music is employed in the worship of God, it should be the best music to be had; and that if there be a noble instrument especially adapted to the performance of sacred music, with something in its very tones that awes the heart and wakens devotional feeling, *that* is beyond all question the instrument to have in our churches. Now all this the true-blue Presbyterian at once denies. He holds that all that is required of a church is protection from the weather, with seat-room, and, perhaps, ventilation; he denies that any solemnized feeling is produced by noble architecture, or that the Gothic vault is fitter for a church than for a factory; he walks into church with his hat on to show he does not care for bricks and mortar; he taboos Christmas-day, with all its gentle and gracious remembrances; he maintains that the barest of all worship is likeliest to be true spiritual service; he holds that there is something essentially evil and sinful in the use of an organ in church; that the organ is "a portion of the trumpery which ignorance and superstition had foisted into the house of God;" that to introduce one is to "convert a church into a concert-room," and "to return back to Judaism;" and that "the use of instrumental music in the worship of God is neither lawful, nor expedient, nor edifying."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Organ Question*, pp. 108, 125, 128, &c.

We confess that we do not know how to argue with men who honestly hold these views. The things which they deny appear to us so perfectly plain already, that no argument can make them plainer. If any man say to us, "I don't feel in the least solemnized by the noble cathedral and the pealing anthem," all we can reply is simply, "Then you are different from human beings in general;" but it is useless to argue with him. If you argue a thesis at all, you can argue it only from things less liable to dispute than itself; and in the case of all these matters attached to Presbytery, though not forming part of its essence, this is impossible. Whenever we have had an argument with an old impracticable Presbyterian, we have left off with the feeling that some people are born Presbyterians; and if so, there is no use in talking to them.

But all these notions to which allusion has been made, are attached to Presbytery by vulgar prejudice; they form no part of its essence, and enlightened Presbyterians now-a-days are perfectly aware of the fact. There is no earthly connection in the nature of things between Presbyterian Church-government and flat-roofed meeting-houses, the abolition of the seasons of the Christian year, a bare and bald ritual, a vile "precentor" howling out of all tune, and a congregation joining as musically as the frogs in Aristophanes. The educated classes in Scotland have for the most part come to see this, and in Edinburgh and Glasgow, even among the Dissenters, we find church-like places of worship, decent singing, and the entire service conducted with propriety. And one of the marked signs of vanishing prejudice is, that a general wish is springing up for the introduction of that noble instrument, so adapted to church-music, the organ. Things

have even gone so far that the principal ecclesiastical court of a considerable Scotch dissenting denomination, has left it to be decided by each congregation for itself, whether it will have an organ or not. And several dissenting ministers of respectable standing and undoubted Presbyterianism, are pushing the matter strongly.

We should have fancied that men of sense in North Britain would have been pleased to find that there is a prospect of the organ being generally introduced: and this upon the broad ground that church-music would thus be made more solemn, more worthy of God's worship, more likely to awaken devotional feeling. We should have fancied that there was no need for special pleading on the part of the advocates of the organ, and assuredly no room for lengthened argument on the part of its opponents. The entire argument, we think, may be summed up thus: Whatever makes church-music more solemn and solemnizing is good; the organ does this: therefore, let us have the organ. If a man denies our first proposition, he is a person who cannot be reasoned with. If he denies the second, he has no musical taste. If he admits both, yet denies the conclusion, then he is either prejudiced or yielding to prejudice. And so the discussion ends. And though we do not by any means hold that the majority is necessarily right, still in this world we have, after all, no further appeal than to the mass of educated men, and they have decided "the organ question." We believe that the Scotch Church and its offshoots are the only Christian sects that taboo the organ.

We should not have been surprised to find opposition to the organ on the part of the unreasoning crowd, who regard it as a rag of Popery, and whose hatred of everything prelatial is quite wonderful. But it startles us to

find reasonable and educated Scotchmen maintaining that an organ is an idol, and that its use is not only inexpedient, but absolutely sinful and forbidden. We have read with considerable interest, and with great surprise, Dr. Candlish's publication on *The Organ Question*, elicited by "the alarm he feels at certain recent movements on behalf of instrumental music in Presbyterian worship." (p. 5.) His part in it is confined to an introductory essay, reflecting little credit upon either his logic or his taste: and instead of arguing the matter for himself, he prefers to reproduce what he regards as a complete discussion of the subject, in two documents, written nearly half a century since. The circumstances under which these were written are as follows:—

In the centre of a considerable square, opening out of the Salt Market of Glasgow (indissolubly associated with the memory of Bailie Nicol Jarvie and Rob Roy), there stands the elegant church of St. Andrew. It is a *facsimile*, on a much reduced scale, of St. Martin's-in-the-fields, at Charing Cross. Fifty years since, Dr. Ritchie, the incumbent of that church, in accordance with the wish of his entire congregation, one of the most intelligent in Scotland, introduced an organ. On Sunday, the 23d of August, 1807, the sole organ which has been used since the Reformation in any Scotch church *in Scotland*,<sup>1</sup> was used for the first and last time. Extreme horror was excited among the ultra-Presbyterians. Dr. Ritchie was forthwith pulled up by the Presbytery of Glasgow, and

<sup>1</sup> Organs are not unfrequently found in Scotch churches *out of Scotland*. The Scotch churches maintained by the East India Company at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, are provided with organs, which are regularly used. The case is the same with several of the Scotch churches in the West Indies, and with one long established at Amsterdam.

getting frightened at his own audacity, he declared at its meeting "that he would not again use an organ in the public worship of God without the authority of the Church." Upon this the Presbytery passed a resolution to the effect "That the Presbytery are of opinion that the use of the organ in the public worship of God, is contrary to the law of the land, and to the law and constitution of our Established Church, and therefore prohibit it in all the churches and chapels within their bounds; and with respect to Dr. Ritchie's conduct in this matter, they are satisfied with his declaration." Dr. Ritchie gave in a paper containing his reasons of dissent; and a committee of the Presbytery prepared a reply to it. These two papers form the substance of the book now sent forth with Dr. Candlish's name.

The commotion excited in Scotland by the introduction of the organ was indescribable. Dr. Ritchie was accused of "the monstrous crime of worshipping God by images, of violating the articles of the Union, of demolishing the barriers for the security of our religion, of committing a deed of perjury to ordination vows." (p. 61.) A howl of execration was directed against the man who had exhibited the flagrant insolence of introducing what John Knox had tastefully described as a "kist fu' o' whistles." Pamphlets and caricatures were numerous. Dr. Candlish thinks it worth while to preserve the remembrance of a picture "which represents Dr. Ritchie, who was about the time of these proceedings translated to Edinburgh, travelling as a street musician, with a barrel organ strapped across his shoulder, and solacing himself with the good old tune, "I'll gang nae mair to yon toun." (p. 28.) Wit and intelligence appear to have been tolerably equal in Scotland in those days.

Dr. Candlish's own sentiments are plainly enough expressed. He thinks that "cogent arguments can be urged, both from reason and Scripture, against the practice of using the organ." (p. 14.) He hopes that his present publication "will make many who have been almost led away by the plausibilities that are so easily got up on the side of organs, pause before they lend themselves to what may cause a most perilous agitation." (p. 31). This is fair enough, because there may be prejudices in the mass of the Scotch people so strong that it would be inexpedient to shock them by introducing instrumental music. But Dr. Candlish goes on, in words which bewilder us, to give his opinion on the essential merits of the question:—

It is not that I am afraid of a controversy on this subject, or of its issue, so far as the merits of the question are concerned. I believe it is a question which touches some of the highest and deepest points of Christian theology. Is the temple destroyed, is the temple worship wholly superseded? Have we, or have we not, priests and sacrifices among us now? Does the Old Testament itself point to anything but the "fruit of the lips," as the peace-offering or thank-offering of gospel times? Is there a trace in the New Testament of any other mode of praise? *For my part, I am persuaded that if the organ be admitted, there is no barrier, in principle, against the sacerdotal system in all its fulness,—against the substitution again, in our whole religion, of the formal for the spiritual, the symbolical for the real!*

And then, remembering that this may offend Episcopalians, Dr. Candlish goes on offensively to say that the Church of England never attained light enough to reject the organ, and may therefore be permitted the use of a carnal contrivance which the more enlightened Presbyterians would be retrograding in taking up. A position at which the organ is retained, is wonderfully well for Southrons; but would be a wretched falling off in the followers of Cameron and Renwick.

Dr. Ritchie appears from his "Statement" to have been an enlightened and educated man, somewhat in advance of his age, and who had miscalculated the consequences of setting up the organ. The pear was not ripe; it is hardly so yet, after the lapse of fifty years. He adduces just such arguments in favor of instrumental music, as would present themselves to any English mind, modified somewhat by his knowledge of the prejudices of the tribunal he addressed. His statement is written with elegance, and temperately expressed. He sets out by stating that the use of instrumental music in worship has its foundation in the best feelings of human nature, prompting men to employ with reverence, according to the means they possess, all their powers in expressing gratitude to their Creator. This use cannot be traced in sacred history from the time of Moses down to that of David: but David not only employed instrumental music himself, but calls "on all nations, all the earth, to praise the Lord as he did, with psaltery, with harp, with organ, with the voice of a psalm." His psalms are constantly sung in Christian worship; "and can it be a sin to sing them, as was done by the original composer, with the accompaniment of an organ?" Christ never found fault with instrumental music, neither did Paul or John; the latter indeed tells us that he beheld in heaven "Harpers harping with their harps." During the earlier centuries, the persecutions to which Christians were exposed probably suffered no thought about a matter not essential: but the use of organs became general in the time of dawning light. At the Reformation it was felt that their use was no essential part of Popery; and thus it was retained by all the reformed churches, those of Luther and Calvin alike, ex-

cept the Church of Scotland. Organs did not find favor in Scotland, because religious persecution had excited in that country a great horror of whatever had been used in popish or prelatical worship, as altars, crosses, organs. But although the organ was associated with Episcopacy, there is no necessary connection : —

And in the use of an organ in church during public praise, I cannot, for my life, after long and serious attention to the subject, discover even an approach to any violation either of the purity or uniformity of our worship. For who will or can allege that an organ is an innovation upon the great object of worship? — we all, I trust, worship the one God, through the one Mediator. Or upon the subject of praise? — for we all sing the same psalms and paraphrases in the same language, all giving thanks for the same mercies. Or upon the posture of the worshippers? — for we all sit, as becomes Presbyterians. Or upon the tunes sung? — for we sing only such as are in general use. Or upon the office of the precentor? — for he still holds his rank, and employs the commanding tones of the organ for guiding the voices of the people. What, then, is it? It is a help, a support given to the precentor's voice, for enabling him more steadily, and with more dignity, to guide the voice of the congregation, and thus to preserve not only uniformity, but that unity of voice which is so becoming in the public service, which so pleasingly heightens devout feelings, and prevents that discord which so easily distracts the attention of the worshippers.

Such is an outline of Dr. Ritchie's argument. Our readers will, we doubt not, be curious to know what considerations, partaking of the nature of argument, can be adduced against the use of organs in church. Most people, we should think, would be more curious to know *this*, than to have arguments in favor of an usage for which common sense is authority sufficient. Now, had the committee of the Glasgow Presbytery assigned their true reason for rejecting the organ, it might have been very briefly set out : it was simply to be different from the Prelatists. A true-blue Presbyterian does not think of discussing the fitness of any observance on the ground

of its own merits. He brings the matter to a shorter issue — viz.: Is it used in the Episcopal Church or is it not? If he goes beyond that, his final question would be, What did John Knox say about it? *His* infallibility is held in Scotland much more strongly and practically than the Pope's is in Italy. If any man in a Scotch Church Court should venture to impugn anything that ever was said by the Reformer, he would draw a perfect storm of indignation upon his own head. We repeat, there is no doctrine more decidedly held in Scotland than that of the infallibility of John Knox. Perhaps that of the impeccability of Calvin should be regarded as a companion doctrine. *His* vagaries as to the Sabbath preclude his reception as infallible. We have seen a paper by an eminent minister of a Scotch dissenting "body," whose purpose was to prove that Calvin was right in burning Servetus. The argument, so far as we could make it out, appeared to be that Calvin's doing so was right, because Calvin did it. Of course, had Servetus burned Calvin, it would have been quite a different thing.

As for the reply to Dr. Ritchie's Statement (which was drawn up by a certain Dr. Porteous), we shall at once say of it that it appears to us characterized by ignorance, stupidity, and vulgarity, in the very highest degree. Dr. Ritchie's paper dealt with broad principles: *this* is mainly employed in paltry personalities and misrepresentations. Its style bristles with such descriptions of instrumental music as "will-worship," "superstitious rites," "converting a church into a concert-room," "an organ *tickling* the ear of the audience" (the italics are the writer's own), "the puerile amusement of pipes and organs," &c. We shall endeavor to pick out from this very tedious lucubration whatever it contains in the nature of argument; and

we believe that our readers will agree with us that the mere statement of the following objections to the organ is sufficient refutation of them. We give our references, lest we should be suspected of caricaturing Dr. Porteous's argument:—

1. Instrumental music in the worship of God is as much part of the Jewish system as circumcision: therefore, if circumcision be abolished, so is the organ. (pp. 86-7.) Instrumental music was essentially connected with sacrifice; and as sacrifice was abolished by Christ's death, so was instrumental music abolished. (pp. 87-8.) The New Testament, by prescribing a new way of worshipping God, — to wit, by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, — is to be understood as abolishing the old way, by instrumental music. (p. 91.) St. Paul, far from commending instrumental music, speaks of it with contempt — If I "have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." (p. 96.) True, harps are spoken of by St. John as in heaven; but St. John was drawing on his recollection of the Temple service, and is not to be literally understood. (pp. 97-8.) So much for the argument from Scripture.

2. The Christians of the early centuries would have had organs, had it been right to have them. As they had them not, "it is evident that they considered it unlawful to employ instrumental music in the worship of God. Both Arians and orthodox would have regarded themselves as returning back to Judaism, if they had permitted it in their public worship." (p. 108.) We are surprised to find the Fathers quoted by a Presbyterian clergyman, but in this case they make in favor of his views. Justin Martyr says, "Plain singing is not childish, but only the singing with lifeless organs: whence

the use of such instruments, and other things fit for children, is laid aside." (pp. 109-10.) Basil speaks of organs as "the inventions of Jubal, of the race of Cain." (p. 111.) Chrysostom says that instrumental music "was only permitted to the Jews for the imbecility and grossness of their souls: but now, instead of organs, Christians must use the body to praise God." (p. 112.) Jerome and Augustine speak in a similar strain. Thomas Aquinas, in the Schoolman age, says, "In the old law, God was praised both with musical instruments and human voices. But the Church does not use musical instruments to praise God, lest she should seem to Judaize." (p. 115.) And we are told, on the authority of Eckhard, that Luther (among other foolish things which he said) said that "*organs were among the ensigns of Baal!*" (p. 119.) There is no doubt that Calvin declared that "Instrumental music is not fitter to be adopted into the public worship of the Christian Church than the incense, the candlesticks, and the other shadows of the Mosaic law." (p. 121.) Our reply to all this is, that the Fathers, Schoolmen, and Reformers, might fall into error: if the question is to be decided by authority, we could adduce a thousand authorities in favor of the organ for every one against it; these eminent men had no other grounds for forming their opinion than are patent to us, and it seems manifest to common sense that neither in reason nor Scripture are there any grounds to support the opinions they express. We appeal to the common sense of mankind, even from the judgment of Chrysostom, Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin.

8. Dr. Porteous's next argument against the organ is, that the Fathers of the Scotch Church "regarded instrumental music as the offspring of Judaism, and abhorred

it as a relic of Popery, and too intimately connected with that prelatie form which our forefathers never could endure." (p. 132.) "It has been allowed by authors, foreign and domestic, that the genius of the Scotch people is much more musical than that either of the English, the Dutch, or the French. But the people of Scotland abhor the blending of the inventions of man with the worship of God. They conceive instrumental music inconsistent with the purity of a New Testament Church." (p. 134.) Then "Knox and Melville, Rutherford and Henderson, offer not one word in behalf of the organ. They allow it to perish unnoticed, as a portion of that trumpery which ignorance and superstition had foisted into the house of God." (p. 140.) "The fixed, determined opposition to instrumental music" among the Scotch Reformers "ariseth from *legal, political, moral, and Scriptural* grounds." (p. 140.) We admit at once that the founders of the Scotch Church had an inveterate dislike for the organ; but as they give us no reason for their dislike, except the fact that the organ had been employed in prelatie worship, and the utterly groundless assertion that instrumental music was a purely Jewish observance, we cannot regard their dislike otherwise than as an irrational prejudice. The argument from Knox's opinion may be a very good one where men believe the infallibility of Knox, but with us it has no weight whatever. We regard ourselves quite as competent to form an opinion in this matter as Knox; and the argument from mere authority will not do in a case where the authorities quoted have no special weight, and are in a minority of one to a hundred.

4. The next argument is addressed exclusive to persons belonging to the Church of Scotland. At the Re-

volution, "Prelacy was for ever abolished in Scotland;" and the organ is part of Prelacy. (pp. 144-5.) The people, at all events, regarded it as such. (p. 145.) And when it was stipulated at the union of the two kingdoms, that the established worship should continue, it was understood on all hands that this stipulation excluded instrumental music. (pp. 150-161.) Every clergyman at his ordination subscribes a formula, in which he "sincerely owns the purity of worship presently authorized and practised in this Church, and that he will constantly adhere to the same; and that he will neither directly nor indirectly endeavor the prejudice and subversion thereof." (p. 162.) But this purity of worship is destroyed by introducing an organ; for "by blending instrumental music with the human voice, the simple melody of our forefathers becomes immediately changed into a medley, composed of animate and inanimate objects." (p. 165.)

We do not think any comment is needful upon all this. We give another passage, which we presume is intended for an argument:—

Man being a reasonable creature, and a reasonable service being demanded from him by God, that reasonable service cannot so properly be performed by man as when he useth his voice alone. This is the vehicle which God hath given him to convey to his Maker the emotions of his soul. Musical instruments may indeed tickle the ear and please the fancy of fallen man. But is God to be likened to fallen man? Organs are the mere invention of man, played often by hirelings, who, while they modulate certain sounds, may possess a heart cold and hard as the nether mill-stone. You may, if you please, style such music the will-worship of the organist; but you surely can not, in common sense, denominate it the praise of devout worshippers, singing with grace, and making melody to the Lord in the heart.

The only passage in Dr. Porteous's argument which appears to us to partake of the nature of discussion

on the merits of the question, is the following vulgarity : —

Your committee have heard your *amateurs* and *dilettanti* assert that their nerves have been completely overcome with the powerful tones of the organ, and the sublime *crash* of instrumental music in the oratorios of Handel. Your committee are willing to allow this musical effect; but they believe, at the same time, that all the musical instruments that ever were used can never produce upon the devout and contemplative mind that sublime and pathetic effect which the well regulated voice of 8000 children produced, when singing the praises of God in the cathedral of St. Paul's, upon the recovery of our good old religious king. Away, then, with the cant of an organ's being so wonderfully calculated to increase the devotion of Christians! Your committee have sometimes had an opportunity of listening to instrumental music, in what is styled cathedral worship. It might for a little time please and surprise by its novelty; the effect, however, was very transitory, and sometimes produced ideas in the mind very different from devotion. Your committee believe that when the praises of God are sung by every individual, even of an unlettered country congregation, the effect is much more noble, and much more salutary to the mind of a Christian audience, than all the lofty artificial strains of an organ, extracted by a hired organist, and accompanied by a confused noise of many voices, taught at great expense to chant over what their hearts neither feel, nor their heads understand.

Now, as it appears to us, this passage is the only one in Dr. Porteous's long treatise which touches the merits of "the organ question." Here he fairly joins issue with the supporters of the organ on the question whether the use of that instrument does or does not render God's praise more solemn and affecting. He maintains that it does not. On the strongest of all evidence, our own experience, we maintain that it does. And we have no higher court to appeal to. We are just brought back to the principle with which we set out — the existence of two sorts or species of human constitution essentially different by nature. Dr. Porteous was a born Presbyterian. We are not. And we can but comfort our-

selves with the belief that were the educated population of Christendom polled, we should be in a majority of ten thousand to one. We make bold to say, that were you to poll the educated people of Scotland, we should have a hundred to one in our favor.

It will amuse our readers to know that this enlightened clergyman, in closing his argument, bestows a parting kick upon the idolatrous organ, by reminding us that we read in the Book of Job, that the wicked of those days "took the timbrel and the harp, and *rejoiced at the sound of the organ.*" (*Job*, ch. xxi. v. 14, 15, p. 188.) And when Nebuchadnezzar erected his golden image, the signal for its worship was "the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music." (*Daniel*, ch. iii. v. 3, p. 189.) What on earth can we say to the man who could seriously write this?

We have thus set forth Dr. Porteous's argument against the organ, an argument which Dr. Candlish tells us, "impressed him, when he first studied it, with the sort of sense of completeness which a satisfactory demonstration gives; and a recent perusal has not lowered his opinion of it." (p. 30.) For ourselves, it has impressed us with absolute wonder to think that any reasonable man could have written a treatise so filled with bigotry and absurdity. We could not think of setting ourselves to answer arguments whose folly is apparent on the first glance at them; indeed, our fear is, that our readers may fancy we have intentionally caricatured them, and we beg to tender the assurance that we have set them out with scrupulous fairness. We lament to see that minds naturally powerful and candid can be cramped and cribbed by gloomy prejudices to the extent exemplified in Drs. Porteous and Candlish, and we confidently make our ap-

peal from them to the common sense of the people of Scotland. The great mass of educated Scotch people is fast becoming extricated from the vulgar prejudice against the organ. In every circle of polished society, the wish may be heard for its introduction, on the broad ground that it would be a great improvement, and that there is no reason whatever against it, except the prejudice of the first Scotch reformers against everything which had been used in popish or prelatic worship. The feeling is gaining ground in Scotland that this spirit of mere contrariety was allowed to go to a most unreasonable length. The spirit of the Covenanters was, "Never mind if kneeling be the natural posture of prayer, and the one we ourselves always adopt in private; the Prelatists kneel in church, and therefore we shall stand. Never mind if the very necessity of using the lungs points to standing as the attitude for singing God's praise; the Prelatists stand, so we shall sit." And there can be no question that the educated classes in Scotland, in laying aside the spirit of pure contrariety to Episcopacy, and looking at observances and estimating them by their own merits, *are* in so far departing from the true Presbyterian principle; if we are to understand by *that* the principle of the gloomy fanatics who signed the Solemn League and Covenant, and thereby undertook to "endeavor the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, and profaneness."<sup>1</sup> No doubt the "Cameronians" and "Original Seceders" of Scotland at the present day, are a great deal more like the Covenanters than is the Church of Scotland. Holding that for many reasons Presbytery is the best form of church-government for Scotland, the great ma-

<sup>1</sup> *Solemn League and Covenant, Section II.*

majority of the clergy of the Scotch Church are equally persuaded that Episcopacy is the best form of church-government for England. And very many of the most influential among the elders of the Church of Scotland, say at once that they are Presbyterians in Scotland and Episcopalians in England. It would indeed be a wretched thing, if in days not over-friendly to ecclesiastical establishments, the Churches of England and Scotland, maintaining precisely the same doctrines, and differing solely in the non-essential of church-government, should ever cherish other than a spirit of mutual kindness and mutual support.

At the same time, it will take another century of railway communication and intercourse with England to rub off the horror of Prelacy and all its belongings which exists among the humble classes — at least, in country-places. A cross over the gable of a church, or a window of stained glass, must still be introduced, in country-parishes, with great caution. We observe from a Scotch newspaper, that a country clergyman, within the last six months, introduced a choir of trained singers into his church, in the hope of improving the psalmody. Whenever the choir began the psalm, most of the congregation closed their books, and refused to join in the singing, and many rose and left the church. A choir was introduced in the parish church of a considerable town in the north of Scotland. Some of the people listened in wonder to its first notes, and then hurried out to escape the profanation, exclaiming, "They'll be bringing o'er the Pope next!" If a country minister wishes his *precentor* or clerk to appear in a gown and a white neckcloth, instead of entering the desk in a sky-blue coat and scarlet waistcoat, some of his parishioners are sure

to trace in the arrangement an undue leaning towards Episcopacy. The minister of a remote parish was presented with a pulpit gown by his people. The people naturally expected to see it next Sunday, and a larger congregation came to see the gown than would have assembled to hear the sermon. The minister, however, wore no gown. Some of the chief contributors to its expense called at the manse, to express the hope of the parish that the gown might be worn.

"I cannot wear it," said the minister; "it is too large for me."

"Too large!" was the reply; "it fits elegantly."

Upon which the enlightened and cultivated gentleman answered —

"No, it is far too large: the tail of it reaches a' the way to Rome!"

No doubt this man would have judged an organ a blasphemous, Satanic, Jewish, Popish, and Prelatic device. But we do not believe that at the present day such a person could be found among the clergy of the farthest presbytery of the Hebrides.

We do not think that the time has come for the general introduction of the organ in Scotland. There is no use in running in the face of the prejudices of a whole people; and while the opponents of the organ regard the question as one of principle, its supporters cannot regard the organ as more than a luxury. It is a step in advance that there should be in Scotland such a thing as "The Organ Question." The matter is now in debate: at one time the Presbyterian who raised it would have been knocked on the head. With the increasing enlightenment of the age, and the rapid communication that now exists between this country and

Scotland, it is a mere matter of time till the organ shall be employed wherever its expense can be afforded. It would be highly inexpedient to press it upon the people now. It would retard the period of its general reception. All that can be looked for at present is, that permission should be granted to each congregation to act upon its own judgment in the matter of the organ. It will be introduced first in the churches in the fashionable parts of Edinburgh and Glasgow, next in country parishes where the squire has been educated at Oxford, and ultimately, we doubt not, it will excite as little wonder in Scotland as it does in England now. The tide is flowing surely. But we shall not live to see that time.

Half-material beings as we are, and often the worse for the material things which surround us — which by their very solidity make spiritual things seem shadowy and unreal in the comparison — it is well when we can make (so to speak) a reprisal on the hostile territory, and get a material thing to conduce to our spiritual advantage. We cannot but think that in all the reasonings of ultra-Presbyterians on the immorality of organs, there is woven a thread of the old Gnostic heresy of the essential evil of matter; as though the same God who made our spirits capable of being impressed, had not made the material sights and sounds which are capable of impressing them. We are not afraid to argue "The Organ Question" with Dr. Candlish on the highest and farthest-reaching grounds, though we think it quite sufficiently decided by the ready appeal to common sense. But what greater harm is there in using the organ's notes to waken pious thought and feeling, than in learning a lesson of our decay from the material emblem of

the fading leaf, or from the lapse of the passing river? If it be not wrong to avail ourselves of the natural pensiveness of the departing light, and to go forth like Isaac in the eventide to meditate upon our most solemn concerns,—why is it sinful or degrading to turn to use the native power which the Creator has set in the organs to stir tender and holy emotion? When we *can* get the Material to yield us any impulse upward, in God's name let us take its aid and be thankful! And as Dr. Candlish likes authorities, we shall conclude with a better authority than that of Dr. Porteous. *He* tells us that the organ may “tickle the ear,” but denies its power to touch the heart. Milton thought otherwise: and we believe that *his* words describe the normal influence of the organ on the healthy human mind:—

But let my due feet never fail  
To walk the studious cloister's pale;  
And love the high embowered roof,  
With antique pillars massy proof,  
And storied windows richly dight,  
Casting a dim religious light;  
There let the pealing organ blow  
To the full-voiced quire below,  
In service high and anthems clear,  
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,  
Dissolve me into ecstasies,  
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THORNDALE; OR, THE CONFLICT OF OPINIONS.<sup>1</sup>

**A**UTHORS, moral and political, have of late years been recognizing the fact, that abstract truths become much more generally attractive when something of human interest is added to them. Most people feel as if thoughts and opinions gain a more substantial being, and lose their ghost-like intangibility, when we know something of the character and history of the man who entertained them, and something of the outward scenery amid which he entertained them. Very many persons feel as if, in passing from fact, or what purports to be fact, to principle, they were exchanging the firm footing of solid land for the yielding and impalpable air; and a framework of scenes and persons is like a wing to buoy them up in traversing that unaccustomed medium. And there are few indeed to whom a peculiar interest does not result when views and opinions, instead of standing nakedly on the printed page, are stated and discussed in friendly council by individual men, seated upon a real grassy slope, canopied by substantial trees, and commanding a prospect of real hills, and streams, and valleys. It is not entirely true that argument has its weight and force in

<sup>1</sup> *Thorndale; or, the Conflict of Opinions.* By William Smith. Edinburgh: Blackwoods. 1857.

itself, quite apart from its author. In the matter of practical effect, on actual human beings, a good deal depends on the lips it comes from.

The author of "Thorndale" has recognized and acted upon this principle. Mr. William Smith is a philosopher and a poet, as the readers of his tragedy, "Athelwold," are already aware; and whoever sits down to read his new book as an ordinary work of fiction to be hurried through for its plot-interest, will probably not turn many pages before closing the volume. The great purpose of the work is to set out a variety of opinions upon several matters which concern the highest interests of the individual man and of the human race; but instead of presenting them in naked abstractness, Mr. Smith has *set* them in a slight story, and given them as the tenets or the fancies of different men, whose characters are so drawn that these tenets and fancies appear to be just their natural culmination and result. If we were disposed to be hypercritical, we might say that the different characters sketched by Mr. Smith are too plainly built up to serve as the *substrata* of the opinions which they express. There is hardly allowance enough made for the waywardness and inconsistency of human conclusion and action. Given any one of Mr. Smith's men in certain circumstances, and we are only too sure of what he will do or say. The Utopian is always hopeful; the desponding philosopher is never brightened up by a ray of hope. But this, it is obvious, is a result arrived at upon system; for we shall find abundant proof in the volume that Mr. Smith has read deeply and accurately into human nature, in all its weaknesses, fancies, hopes, and fears. It is long since we have met with a more remarkable or worthy book. Mr. Smith is always thoughtful and suggestive: he has

been entirely successful in carrying out his wish to produce a volume in reading which a thoughtful man will often pause with his finger between the leaves, and muse upon what he has read. We judge that the book must have been written slowly, and at intervals, from its affluence of beautiful thought. No mind could have turned off such material with the equable flow of a stream. We know few works in which there may be found so many fine thoughts, light-bringing illustrations, and happy turns of expression, to invite the reader's pencil. A delicate refinement, a simple and pathetic eloquence, a kindly sympathy with all sentient things, are everywhere apparent: but the construction of the book, in which the most opposite opinions are expressed by the different characters without the least editorial comment, approval or disapproval, renders it difficult to judge what are truly the opinions of the author himself. Mr. Smith's English style is of classic beauty: nothing can surpass the delicate grace and finish of many passages of description and reflection; and although it was of course impossible, and indeed not desirable, that equal pains should be bestowed upon the melody of all the pages of the book, still the language is never slovenly; the hand of the tasteful scholar is everywhere. Nor should we fail to remark the author's versatility of power. Everything he does is done with equal ease and felicity: — description of external nature, analysis of feeling and motive, close logic, large views of men and things. There is not the gentle and graceful humor of Mr. Helps: the book is serious throughout, with no infusion of playfulness. The author evidently thinks that in this world there is not much to smile at, — unless it be at everything. Let us remark, that in this volume the characters come and go as in real

life. There is nothing of the novel's artificial working up of interest, deepening to the close. Mr. Smith may say of his book, as Mr. Bailey of his grand but unequal poem : —

“ It has a plan, but no plot : — Life has none.”

But Mr. Smith's men, after all, are not such as one commonly meets. They are all greatly occupied, and for the most part perplexed and distressed about speculative and social difficulties. Now in ordinary life such distresses are little felt. Are we wrong in saying that they are never felt at all, except in idleness ; — or by minds far above the average of the race ? How little are the perplexities of speculation to the busy man, anxious and toiling to find the means of maintaining his wife and children, of paying his Christmas bills, and generally of making the ends meet at the close of the year ! *That*, whether we admit the fact or deny it, is, with the great majority even of cultivated men, the practical problem of life. And indeed it is sad to think how, long before middle age, in many a man who started with higher aspirations, *that* becomes the great end of labor and of thought. But it seems to be a law of mind, that as the grosser and more material wants are supplied, other wants of a more ethereal and fanciful nature come to be felt. And thus perhaps many a man, whom circumstances now compel to bestow all his energies on the quest of the supply of the day that is passing over him and his, is by those very circumstances saved from feeling wants more crushing, and from grappling with riddles and mysteries that sit with a heavy perplexity upon the heart. Let us be thankful if we are not too independent of work : let us be thankful that we are not too thoughtful and able.

Mr. Smith's book sets out with a charming description of a secluded dwelling to which a young philosophic thinker, smitten by consumption, had retired to die. On a little terrace, near the summit of Mount Pòsilipo, there stands a retired villa, looking from that height over the Bay of Naples. Overlooked by none, it commands a wide extent of view. Myrtle and roses have overgrown its pillared front. The rock descends sheer down from the terrace. Charles Thorndale, the hero of the book, had been charmed by the *Villa Scarpa* in the course of a continental tour, made while still in health; and when stricken with the disease of which he died, and when the physicians spoke of the climate of Italy, he chose this for his last retreat. It would not be long he would be there, he knew; and in its quiet he had much to think of.

It is a spot, one would say, in which it would be very hard to part with this divine faculty of thought. It seems made for the very spirit of meditation. The little platform on which the villa stands is so situated, that, while it commands the most extensive prospect imaginable, it is itself entirely sheltered from observation. No house of any kind overlooks it; from no road is it visible; not a sound from the neighboring city ascends to it. From one part of the parapet that bounds the terrace you may sometimes catch sight of a swarthy, bare-legged fisherman, sauntering on the beach, or lying at full length in the sun. It is the only specimen of humanity you are likely to behold: you live solely in the eye of nature. It is with difficulty you can believe that within the space of an hour you may, if you choose it, be elbowing your way, jostled and stunned, amongst the swarming population of Naples—surely the noisiest hive of human beings anywhere to be found on the face of the earth. Here, on these heights, is perfect stillness, with perfect beauty. What voices come to you from the upper air—the winds and the melody of birds; and not unfrequently the graceful sea-gull utters its short, plaintive cry, as it wheels round and back to its own ocean-fields. And then that glorious silent picture for ever open to the eye! Picture! you hastily retract the word. It is no dead picture; it is the living spirit of the universe manifesting itself, in glorious vision, to the eye and the soul of man.

Thorndale was a studious man, but had not been attracted by either of the learned professions. His modest competency relieved him from the necessity of choosing a decided path in life. Like many meditative idlers, he intended, vaguely, to write a book; and, indeed, he did finish a philosophical treatise more than once; but he always became dissatisfied with it and destroyed it. But in his retirement at Villa Scarpa, a large manuscript volume lay on his table, in which, "the habit of the pen" clinging to him to the last, he was accustomed to write down his thoughts upon whatever topic interested him for the time. This book was autobiography, essay, diary, record of former conversations with friends, as the humor of the moment prompted; and we are invited to believe that this book, having fallen into the hands of Mr. Smith, is now given to the world:—

It is precisely this manuscript volume, note-book, memoir, diary, whatever it should be called, which we have to present to the reader. In it, Thorndale, though apparently with little of set purpose or design, gives us a description of himself and of several friends, or rather sketches out their opinions and modes of thinking. Amongst these two may be at once particularly mentioned: *Clarence*, who might be called a representative of the philosophy of hope; and *Seckendorf*, his complete contrast, and who, especially on the subject of human progress, takes the side of denial or of cavil.

The author, or editor, sets before us the character of his hero, less by one complete description, than by many touches, given here and there, as he exhibits Thorndale to us in various combinations of circumstances, and at several critical points in his life. Our impression of Thorndale is being retouched, modified, lightened, and shadowed, on to the close of the book. He was a meditative and melancholy man, of little pith or active energy: he was shy and retiring; overshadowed by a settled despond-

ency; but always kind and gentle, with no trace of fretfulness or irritability. Although his character is an interesting and truthful one, it is essentially morbid; and we may be glad that men like him must always be few. We should have no railroads, no Great Easterns, no ocean telegraphs, in a world peopled by Thorndalcs. The weakly physical constitution which he bore from birth, had much to do with the tone of his thought and feeling. The remark is in the main just and sound, though it was made by Boswell:—

The truth is, that we judge of the happiness and misery of life differently at different times, according to the state of our changeable frame. I always remember a remark made to me by a Turkish lady educated in France: *Ma foi, monsieur, notre bonheur dépend de la façon que notre sang circule.*

Nor ought we to forget that deeply philosophic remark of Sydney Smith, that little stoppages in the bodily circulation are the things which, above all others, darken our views of life and of man. A friend, said the genial physiologist, comes to him in a most depressed condition. He declares that his affairs are getting embarrassed; that he must retrench his establishment and retire to the country; that his daughter's cough has settled upon the lungs; that his wife is breaking up, and his son going to the mischief. But Sydney only asks on what he supped the evening before; and finds that he then partook of lobster to an undue degree. "All this," he says, "all these gloomy views are the lobster." Instead of seeking directly to minister to a mind diseased, he does so indirectly, but not the less effectually. He suggests medicine, not philosophy. And next day the world is a capital world, after all; the income is ample, the cough is gone, the wife is in rude health, and the son all that a father's

heart could wish. Now in the case of Thorndale, there was an entire deficiency of healthy animalism; and if, as a Scotch divine lately declared in a sermon published by royal command, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a dyspeptic man to be kind, gentle, and long-suffering; not less true is it that a well-knit, vigorous, sinewy mind, is oftentimes trammelled and hampered all through life, by being linked to a weakly, puny, jaded body. How much of Sydney Smith's wit, how much of Christopher North's reckless abandonment of glee, was the result of physical organization! How incomprehensible to many men must such despondency as Thorndale's seem! No worldly wants or anxieties, no burden of remorse, kind friends around him, what right had he to be unhappy?<sup>1</sup> Thorndale, in short, is a less energetic and passionate form of the nameless hero of *Maud*. Shall we confess that a less happy association at certain points in his history suggested itself to our mind? We thought of Mr. Augustus Moddle, of whom his historian records as follows:—

He often informed Mrs. Todgers that the sun had set upon him; that the billows had rolled over him; that the car of Juggernaut had crushed him; and also that the deadly upas tree of Java had blighted him.<sup>2</sup>

Young men, who at five-and-twenty profess that they have lost all interest in life, and that they have done with time, are by no means uncommon. But Byron's influ-

<sup>1</sup> We remember a review of *Maud* which we read in a certain provincial journal. The writer evidently thought the gloomy hero an ungrateful and querulous fellow for making such a moan. "Why," said the reviewer, "the man was in very comfortable circumstances: he was able to have two servants ('I keep but a man and a maid'); and what earthly right had he to be always grumbling? If a man has two servants, ought he not to be content?"

<sup>2</sup> Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

ence is wearing out; and they are pretty generally laughed at. Yet where a lad at college can say sincerely, as Thorndale said —

For me, there was more excitement to be got out of any dingy book, thumbed over by a solitary rushlight, than from fifty ball-rooms —

his mind is taking a morbid growth, which bodes no good to himself; nor are things better when he goes on a tour to the Cumberland lakes, and instead of cheerfully enjoying the scenes around him, goes on as follows: —

Forgetful of lake and mountain, my eyes fixed perhaps on the topmost bar of some roadside gate which I had *intended* to open, or pausing stock-still before some hedgerow in the solitary lane, apparently intent upon the buds of the hawthorn, as if I were penetrating into the very secrets of vegetable life, I have stood for hours musing on the intricate problems which our social condition presents to us.

We need not say that such a man is out of his place in England in the nineteenth century. In this age we want, not visionaries, but actors; healthy, robust men, like Arnold, who can think and reason, and who can likewise walk five miles in the hour. Perhaps, indeed, the cry for "muscular Christianity" is passing into cant; and we know of noble minds which, notwithstanding the clog of physical debility and suffering, bear a kindly sympathy towards all mankind, and make the race their debtors for the gift of elevating thoughts. But as for Thorndale — sensitive as the mimosa, ever watching with introverted eye the lights and shadows of his own mind — how could he be happy? A certain amount of insensibility is in this world needful to that. We must not bear a nervous system so delicately appreciative of external influences as to keep us ever on the flutter or on the rack. Above all, let us have the equable mind, though it should live in a light which is uniformly sub-

dued, rather than that which is ever alternating between April sunshine and April gloom. Justly and thoughtfully did Wordsworth make this equanimity a marked characteristic of the happiness of a higher life : —

He spake of love, such love as spirits feel,  
In worlds whose course is equable and pure:  
No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,  
The past unsighed for, and the future sure:  
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood  
Revived, with finer harmony pursued.<sup>1</sup>

We may have faults to find with the character of Thorndale, regarded as that of a representative man : but we feel at once with what delicate accuracy the author maintains its keeping. From first to last, he never speaks or acts otherwise than he ought, under the given conditions. The malady that killed him had marked him from his birth ; and he is always the same kindly, tender-hearted, meditative, unenergetic, spiritless being. Mr. Smith shows us the whole man by one happy touch. Thorndale had chosen the shores of Loch Lomond as his autumn retreat one year. He had been there only a day, when he suddenly resolved that he would return and seek the hand of a gentle cousin whom he loved, and who appears not to have been indifferent to him. He had hitherto kept silence, because her worldly position was higher than his own. He left Loch Lomond on the instant ; he travelled on day and night ; he seemed never to have drawn breath till he stood at the gate of the shrubbery that surrounded Sutton Manor, her home and his : —

Then indeed I paused. Leaning on the half-opened gate, I saw again my own position in its true and natural light. Was it not al-

<sup>1</sup> *Laodamia.*

ways known and understood that *such a thing was not to be*? One after the other, all my fallacious reasonings deserted me. What madness could have brought me there? I hoped no one had seen me. Slowly and softly the half-opened gate was closed again. I walked away, retracing my steps as unobserved as possible through the village.

Here was Thorndale himself. Like most thoughtful men, he had much of the irresolution of Hamlet, — the irresolution that comes of thinking too much. There can be no doubt that in order to act slap-dash, with promptness and decision, it is best not to see a case in all its bearings. It is best to see one side clearly and strongly: — and then no lurking irresolution will retard the arm in its descent. Here was the secret of poor Thorndale's creeping away, with a sinking heart, from the only presence he cared for in this world. There is not invariable truth in the lines of Montrose, —

He either fears his fate too much,  
Or his desert is small,  
Who dares not put it to the touch,  
And win or lose it all.

We need not relate how the author explains his chancing upon Villa Scarpa in wandering about Naples. The villa was then deserted; all was over. We have no particulars recorded of Thorndale's death. We confess we feel in this omission something of cruelty on the author's part towards his hero. There is something pitiful in the story of the neglected manuscript-volume, found after the poor visionary was gone, hidden away in the roof of the abandoned house; and in the picture which rises before us of the tender-hearted youth, lying down to die alone. He had a kind servant, indeed; and an old friend, with his little adopted daughter, who reappeared as evening was darkening down, may be sup-

posed to have tended and soothed the last agony. But Mr. Smith, in his careful avoidance of whatever might seem a clap-trap expedient to excite interest and feeling, is entirely silent as to the close. However, he chanced on the deserted Villa Scarpa: he found a despatch-box, bearing the name of Charles Thorndale, whom he had known, though not intimately. This despatch-box contained the manuscript volume already mentioned, which Thorndale seemed to have bequeathed to the first finder and the good-natured Italian to whom the villa belonged, willingly gave up box and manuscript to one who said he had been Thorndale's friend. We quote a single sentence, for its graceful beauty, from the picture of Thorndale called up to the mind's eye of his editor, on thus chancing on his last retreat:—

His eye was not that of which it is so often said that it looks through you, for it rather seemed to be looking out beyond you. The object at which it gazed became the half-forgotten centre round which the eddying stream of thought was flowing; and you stood there, like some islet in a river which is encircled on all sides by the swift and silent flood.

The manuscript volume now published has been divided by its editor into five books, and each of these into several chapters. Book I. is called "The Last Retreat:" it is given to many reflections, mostly thrown out with little arrangement, upon the Sentiment of Beauty, and upon the two Futurities, the one on this side and the other beyond the grave. In Book II., which is called "The Retrospect," the current of thought has set away into the past; and we have an autobiographical sketch. Book III., called "Cyril, or the Modern Cistercian," gives an account of the conflict of thought by which a companion passed from an Evangelical Anglican to a

Roman Catholic monk. Book IV., "Seckendorf, or the Spirit of Denial," sketches the character and views of a friend who cavilled at the possibility of all human progress. In Book V., "Clarence, or the Utopian," we first read how, as strength and life had well-nigh ebbed away, Thorndale met once more with an old friend of hopeful views, who seems to have stayed by him to the last: and when Thorndale's weak hand had laid down the pen for the last time, Clarence wrote out, in the last two hundred pages of the volume, his *Confessio Fidei*;—a connected view of his theory of man, the growth of the individual consciousness, and the development of the human race.

The earlier part of the book is very desultory; and the book as a whole appeals to a limited class of readers. There will never be a rush for it to the book-club in the county town. Young-lady readers will for the most part vote it a bore; and solid old gentlemen of bread-and-butter intellect will judge Thorndale and his friends a crew of morbid dreamers,—though the book, amid sublimer speculations, sets out here and there much common sense on the affairs of practical life. But we trust that Mr. Smith may find an audience fit, and not so few. It elevates and refines the mind to hold converse with an author of his stamp. And how much the world must have gone through before such a character as Thorndale's became possible! No appliance of modern luxury, no contrivance of modern science, says so much as the conception of such a character for the civilization and artificiality of our modern life. Although the book is mainly dissertational, the reader will find in it much exquisite narrative, and much skilful delineation of character, in the history of the hero and his friends, their views

and fates. Yet, while we cordially acknowledge in Mr Smith a man of refined and pathetic genius, we should not be doing justice to ourselves if we did not say, that in all the views of life and society, whether hopeful or desponding, which are set out in the book, we have felt strongly a great blank and void. We believe, and we humbly hope we shall never cease believing, that Christianity shows us the true stand-point from which to look at man, and the true lever by which to elevate him. We believe that the same influence which has raised our hopes to "life and immortality," must and will elevate and purify this mortal life. We believe that it is false philosophy to ignore the existence, power, and teaching of the Christian faith; and to take pains, before looking into the framework and the prospects of society, to exclude the only light which can search out the dark recesses, and dissipate the gloom that hangs before. Why should a man persist in wading through Chat Moss on a drenching December day, when the means are provided of flitting over it, light and warm and dry? Why should we go up to Box-hill, and declare we shall dig our way through it with our own nails and fingers (being in haste); when we know that it has been nobly tunnelled for us already?

The first book, entitled "The Last Retreat," consists of disjointed fragments of thought, cast upon the page with little effort at arrangement. *All* these fragments are well worthy of preservation: many of them are of striking originality and force. The dying man becomes aware that a peculiar beauty has been added to the beautiful scenes around him by the close approach of death. He says, —

I owe to death half the beauty of this scene, and altogether owe to him the constant serenity with which I gaze upon it. . . . Strange: how the beauty and mystery of all nature is heightened by the near prospect of that coming darkness which will sweep it all away! — that night which will have no star in it! These heavens, with all their glories, will soon be blotted out for me. The eye, and that which is behind the eye will soon close, soon rest, and there will be no more beauty, no more mystery for me. . . . What an air of freshness, of novelty, and surprise, does each old and familiar object assume to me when I think of parting with it for ever!

There is no more of ennui *now*. Time is too short, and this world too wonderful. Everything I behold is new and strange. If a dog looks up at me in the face, I startle at *his* intelligence. "I am in a foreign land," you say. True, all the world has become foreign land to me. I am perpetually on a voyage of discovery.

Very true, very real, is this feeling, drawn from the much-suggesting Νύξ γὰρ ἐρχεται! We really do enjoy things intensely, because we know we are not to have them long. And how well does experience certify that the most familiar scene grows new and strange to us when we are forthwith to leave it. The room in which we have sat day by day for years, — rise to quit it for the last time, and we shall see something about its proportions, its aspect, that we never saw before. The little walk we have paced hundreds of times, — how different every evergreen beside it will seem, when we pace it silently, knowing that we shall do so no more!

Here is an apt and happy comparison: —

When the lofty and barren mountain, says a legend I have somewhere read, was first upheaved into the sky, and from its elevation looked down on the plains below, and saw the valley and the less elevated hills covered with verdure and fruitful trees, it sent up to Brahma something like a murmur of complaint, "Why thus barren? Why these scarred and naked sides exposed to the eye of man?" And Brahma answered, "The very light shall clothe thee, and the shadow of the passing cloud shall be as a royal mantle. More verdure would be less light. Thou shalt share in the azure of heaven,

and the youngest and whitest cloud of a summer day shall nestle in thy bosom. Thou belongest half to us."

So was the mountain dowered. And so too have the loftiest minds of men been in all ages dowered. To lower elevations have been given the pleasant verdure, the vine, and the olive. Light, light alone, and the deep shadow of the passing cloud, — these are the gifts of the prophets of the race.

Thorndale felt strongly what every reflective man must feel, that the ordinary arguments for the immortality of the soul, drawn from the light of nature, are quite insufficient and unsatisfactory. It is upon entirely different grounds, and these grounds partaking often but little of the nature of argument, that the belief in the doctrine really rests. Still the argument fills the page; and is appended to the doctrine much as in cheap Gothic buildings a buttress is added to a wall which does not need its support, because it at least looks as if it supported the wall. Thorndale's illustration is this: —

In old wood-cuts one sometimes sees a vessel in full sail upon the ocean, and perched aloft upon the clouds are a number of infant cherubs, with puffed-out cheeks, blowing at the sails. The swelling canvas is evidently filled by a stronger wind than these infant cherubs, sitting in the clouds, could supply. They do not fill the sail; but they were thought to fill up the picture prettily enough.

In truth, the usual arguments for immortality are quite futile: none more so than that founded upon the immateriality of the soul. The soul's immateriality is assumed to be proved by a manifest *petitio principii*, to use the logician's phrase. The soul is immaterial, we are told, because it thinks and feels; and matter cannot think and feel. But if the soul be material, why then matter *can* think and feel. Thorndale indicates as follows the foundation of his own belief: —

I think the contemplation of God brings with it the faith in immor

talities. The mere imperfections of our happiness here, our blundering lives and inequitable societies, our unrewarded virtues and unavenged crimes, our present need of the great threat of future punishments, — these do not, in my estimation, form safe grounds to proceed upon. They enter largely as grounds of a popular faith; but it would be unwise to build upon them: because to rest on such arguments would lead us to the conclusion, that in proportion as society advances to perfection, and men are more wise and just, in the same proportion will they have less presumption for the hope of immortality.

We confess that we stand in no great fear of this last suggestion. There is little prospect, as yet, of this world becoming too good to need another. We need now, and we shall need for many a year, all the comfort and help we can draw from "the world that sets this right."

Our readers will thank us for extracting the following passage: —

A fond mother loses her infant. What more tender than the hope she has to meet it again in heaven? Does she really, then, expect to find a little child in heaven? some angel-nursling, that she may eternally take to her bosom, fondle, feed, and caress? Oh, do not ask her! I would not have her ask herself. The consolatory vision springs spontaneously from the mother's grief. It is nature's own remedy. She gave that surpassing love, and a grief as poignant must follow. She cannot take away the grief: she half transforms it to a hope.

It is indeed quite true, that in the attempt to define with precision the consolations and hopes which Christianity affords us with respect to our departed friends, we sometimes only destroy what we desired to grasp. And it would be hard for us to say exactly how and in what form we hope to meet again the dear ones who have gone before us. Perhaps Archbishop Whately is right, when he suggests as one possible reason why revelation leaves the details so little *filled in* of the picture of immortality which it draws, that some margin may be left

for the weakness of human thought and wish ; and that in matters beside the great essential centre-truth, each may believe or may hope that which he would love the best. And in the matter of a little child's loss, we know that two quite opposite beliefs have been cherished. For ourselves, it seems more natural to think of the little thing as it left us ; we believe that, in the case of most of us, the little brother or sister that died long ago, remains in remembrance the same young thing forever. Many years are passed, and we have grown older and more careworn since our last sister died ; but *she* never grows older with the passing years ; and if God spares us to fourscore, we never shall think of her as other than the youthful creature she faded. Still there is pathos and nature in Dickens's description, how the father and mother who lost in early childhood one of two twin sisters, always pictured to themselves, year after year, the dead child growing in the world beyond the grave, in equal progress as the living child grew on earth. And Longfellow, in his touching poem of *Resignation*, suggests a like idea : —

Day after day, we think what she is doing  
In those bright realms of air:  
Year after year, her tender steps pursuing,  
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken  
The bond which nature gives,  
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,  
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;  
For when, with raptures wild,  
In our embraces we again enfold her,  
She will not be a child.

It is worthy of notice, how the death of little children has formed the subject of several of the most touching poems in the language. Only those could have written them who have children of their own; and few but parents can fully enter into their pathos. We may remind our readers of Mr. Moultrie's best poem, "The Three Sons;" of Mrs. Southey's (Caroline Bowles) beautiful picture of an infant's death-bed; and in a volume lately published by Gerald Massey, natural feeling has kept affectation from spoiling a most touching piece, called "The Mother's Idol Broken." And no one needs to be reminded of what it is that has afforded scope for the most pathetic touches of Dickens and Mrs. Beecher Stowe.

Thorndale puts a somewhat startling question as to the *extent* of the gift of immortality.

Why must I except the alternative — all or none? Why every Hun and Scythian, or else no Socrates or Plato? Why must every corrupt thing be brought again to life, or else all hope be denied to the good and the great, the loving and the pious? Why must I measure my hopes by the hopes I would assign to the most weak or wicked of the race? Let the poor idiot, let the vile Tiberius, be extinct forever: must I too, and all these thoughts that stir in me, perish?

Probably Thorndale was not aware that this notion, which he throws out on merely philosophical grounds, is one which, in a modified form, has been suggested, if not maintained, upon theological principles, by the most independent and original theologian of the age — we mean the Archbishop of Dublin. Dr. Whately has proposed it as a subject for inquiry, whether those passages of Scripture which describe the everlasting destruction of the finally impenitent, may not be justly interpreted as signifying their total annihilation; and thus, whether evil

and suffering may not entirely cease to be in God's universe, not by an universal restoration of all things to the good and right, but by the total disappearance of that which has been marred past the mending? No doubt, there is something unutterably appalling in the thought of a soul in everlasting woe; no doubt, to our finite minds, it appears the most consistent with the divine glory and happiness, that a time should come when there should be no more pain, sin, and death, anywhere; but the Christian dares not add to or take from *that which is written*; and few, we think, can read the words even of the Saviour himself as bearing any other meaning than one. And as for the difficulty suggested by Thorndale, we confess we can discern in it very little force. It is a humble thing, always and everywhere, to be a man: whether the man be Plato or the Hun. We do not look for immortality on the ground that we deserve it, or that we are fit for it. And although there may be truth in Judge Haliburton's bitter remark, that there is a greater difference between some men and some other men, than there is between these other men and some monkeys; still, in looking down from the divine elevation, we believe that the distances parting the lowest and highest, the worst and best, must seem very small. Look down from the top of Ben Nevis, and the tuft of heather which is a dozen inches higher than the heather round it, differs not appreciably from the general level. Nor should it be forgotten, that in the lowest and the worst, there is a potentiality of becoming good and noble under a certain influence which philosophy does not know of, but whose reality and power we are content to test by the logic of induction. The coarse lump of ironstone is in its essence the self-same thing as the hair-spring of a watch.

We pass to the second part of Thorndale's manuscript, the *Retrospect*, which will be much more interesting to ordinary readers than the first book. And here we find a graceful and beautiful sketch of the history of his life, from the dawn of consciousness down to the time when he came to Villa Scarpa to die. He was the happy child of a gentle and loving mother, over whom early widowhood had cast a shade of melancholy. His father he never knew. A poor lieutenant in the navy, he died of fever caught as his ship lay rotting off the coast of Africa. The mother's piety was deep, and her faith undoubting; she knew nothing of the world beyond her own little daisied lawn. And the remembrance of the prayer she early taught her child to utter, has inspired one of the most beautiful passages in English literature:—

Very singular and very pleasing to me is the remembrance of that simple piety of childhood; of that prayer which was said so punctually night and morning, kneeling by the bedside. What did I think of, guiltless then of metaphysics,—what image did I bring before my mind as I repeated my learnt petition with scrupulous fidelity? Did I see some venerable Form bending down to listen? Did He cease to look and listen when I had said it all? Half prayer, half lesson, how difficult it is now to summon it back again! But this I know, that the bedside where I knelt to this morning and evening devotion became sacred to me as an altar. I smile as I recall the innocent superstition which grew up in me, that the prayer must be said *kneeling just there*. If, some cold winter's night, I had crept into bed, thinking to repeat the petition from the warm nest itself, it would not do!—it was felt in this court of conscience to be 'an insufficient performance:' there was no sleep to be had till I had risen, and, bedgowned as I was, knelt at the accustomed place, and said it all over again from the beginning to the end. To this day, I never see the little clean white bed in which a child is to sleep, but I see also the figure of a child kneeling in prayer at its side. And I, for the moment, am that child. No high altar in the most sumptuous church in Christendom could prompt my knee to bend like that snow-white coverlet tucked in for a child's slumber.

The mother early died; and her brother a baronet,

who dwelt in a noble house standing in a fine old English park, adopted the desolate child as his own. Grand were the trees and fair the shrubberies of Sutton Manor ; but its great attraction to Thorndale was his little cousin Winifred. He loved her, he tells us, before he knew what love was, and long before he knew the vast worldly distance that parted even such near relations. Lady Moberly, Winifred's mother, was a lady at once ultra-fashionable and ultra-evangelical. She was one of those of whom the sarcastic *Saturday Review* declared that the names of their great men must be written alike in the *Peerage* and in the Book of Life. Thorndale was shortly placed under the charge of a country clergyman, to be prepared for Oxford. Here he had one fellow-pupil, Luxmore, a youth passionately devoted to poetry. And his tutor's library furnished an endless store of poetry, theology, and philosophy, which were all devoured with equal avidity. When the vacation approached, Thorndale was somewhat surprised by receiving from Lady Moberly a formal invitation to Sutton Manor. He had counted, as a matter of course, upon spending the vacation there. But her ladyship was cautious ; and her letter contained a postscript, cautioning Thorndale to beware of a certain fairy who haunted the shrubbery in which he was accustomed to walk. He learned the meaning of the postscript too soon. His cousin was more charming than ever ; but his love, hopeless, yet unconquerable, was on his part "a mere worship, where even the prayer was not to be spoken." And this passion served to extinguish all ambition. He entered the cloisters of Magdalen, he tells us, —

as indifferent to the world as any monk of the fourteenth century could have been. Academical honors, or the greater distinctions in

life to which they prepare the way, had no sort of charm for me. The 'daily bread' was secured; and neither law, physic, nor divinity could have given me my Winifred.

A life of mere reflection, then, was to be his portion. His over-sensitive mind never recovered the frost of that early disappointment. Is it too much to say that it results from the morbid body, from the weakness of physical nature, when trouble and sorrow, no matter how heavy, borne in early youth, cast their shadow over all after-years? What a vast deal a healthy man can "get over!" True, as beautiful, are the words of Philip van Artevelde, in Mr. Taylor's noble play:—

Well, well, — she's gone,  
And I have tamed my sorrow. Pain and grief  
Are transitory things, no less than joy,  
And though they leave us not the men we were,  
Yet they do leave us. You behold me here,  
A man bereaved, with something of a blight  
Upon the early blossoms of his life,  
And its first verdure, — having not the less  
A living root, and drawing from the earth  
Its vital juices, from the air its powers:  
And surely as man's health and strength are whole,  
His appetites re-germinate, his heart  
Re-opens, and his objects and desires  
Shoot up renewed.<sup>1</sup>

How many twice-married men and women can testify to the truth of Artevelde's philosophy! Out of a romance, it takes very much to kill a man, — unless, indeed, consumption has marked him from his birth, and his physical constitution lacks the reacting spring. But Mr. Smith has made his hero feel and act just as it was fit under the conditions given. He became a solitary dreamer; and though feeling the attraction which draws

<sup>1</sup> Taylor's *Philip van Artevelde*, Second Part, Act iii., Scene ii.

the moth to the flame, yet at vacation times, instead of going to Sutton Manor, he betook himself to Wales or Cumberland, to "read." There he read, thought, wrote, destroyed. He mused deeply on the constitution of society : he longed for a time when manual labor should not be deemed inconsistent with refinement and intelligence. But he found his theory crumble at the touch of fact.

As I marched triumphantly along, I came to a field where men were ploughing. I had often watched the ploughman as he steps on steadily, holding the share down in its place in the soil, and felt curious to try the experiment myself. This time, as the countryman who approached me had a good-natured aspect, I asked him to let me take his place within the stils. He did so. I did not give him quite the occasion for merriment which I saw he anticipated; I held down the share, and kept it in its due position. But I had no conception of the effort it required — which, at least, it cost me. When I resigned my place, my arms trembled, my hands burned, my brain throbbed; the whole frame was shaken. And something, too, was shaken in the framework of my speculations. The feasibility of uniting with labors such as these much of the culture we call intellectual, was not so clear to me as it was an hour ago. I walked along less triumphantly, maintaining a sort of prudent silence with myself.

Thorndale all over ! Easily driven by some little jar, even from a cherished purpose or belief. AH physical constitution again. In the days when manual labor and mental cultivation are combined, men like Thorndale must be watchmakers and printers : men with more bone and sinew must go to field-work. But who does not remember the diary of Elihu Burritt, when teaching himself half a dozen languages, with its constantly recurring entries of "Forged twelve hours to-day" — "Forged fourteen hours to-day" — the brawny blacksmith, with his fore-hammer and his Hebrew lexicon side by side ?

Very frankly and without reserve, Thorndale shows

us how his opinions on society swayed to and fro. He went to see Manchester, and mourned to think how, "for leave to live in habitations, where air and light, beauty and fragrance, are shut out for ever, men and women are toiling as no other animal on the face of the earth toils." And, caring little for conventional proprieties, he sits down in London on the steps of a church — it was in Regent-street — amid the offscourings of the population, and contemplated society from this new point of view. It looked very different! He heard the stifled mutterings of the deadly hate which the very lowest class bear to those above them. The ground underneath us, in truth is mined: the mine is charged. Is not the hatred *natural*? We do not ask whether it is right.

Without a doubt, we of the pavement, if we had our will, would stop those smooth-rolling chariots, with their liveried attendants (how we hate those clean and well-fed lackeys!), would open the carriage-door, and bid the riders come down to us! — come down to share — good heaven! what? — our ruffianage, our garbage, the general scramble, the general filth.

Walking another day down Regent-street, he passes an open carriage standing at a shop-door. Seated alone in it is — Winifred! He avoids recognition, and hurries away. Soon he slackens his speed — stops — turns, walks back, slowly, rapidly, breathlessly! The carriage was gone. True to the life!

He left Oxford at last, and returned to Sutton Manor. "It was the old story of the moth and the flame." He resolved that for a month his heart should have its way; and rowing with Winifred on the river, wandering with her in the shrubbery, watching the sun go down, he had his "month of elysium." All his philosophy was in

those days full of hope. He wondered at the greatness of the human *capacity for happiness*. At length he broke hurriedly away, and hastened to Loch Lomond. We have already seen how he returned, and with what result.

Then he became a wanderer. He tells us he never ceased to think, but "a despondency crept from his life into his philosophy." He went to Germany, Switzerland, Italy—the accustomed route—and learned to appreciate the diversity there is in human life. On the banks of the lake of Lucerne he met his Utopian friend, Clarence, whom he had known at Oxford; and they spent long days in varied talk together. Clarence dwelt much upon the misery of the better or the middle classes. He thought it exceeds that of the poor wretches on the Regent-street steps. What ceaseless and life-wearing anxiety and care there are in the hearts of most educated men! Clarence did not wonder that men go mad. As life goes against them, as the income proves insufficient, as the expenses increase, as impending calamity ever jars miserably upon the shaken nerves, and as the mind is day by day racked by ceaseless fears, the only wonder is that Reason does not oftener forsake her seat, totter, and fall!

On some futile pretence of seeing his friend, Luxmore, the poet, Thorndale returned to England. Luxmore had published, and failed. Thorndale found him in a Special Pleader's office, studying for the bar. Luxmore held steadily to his books of Practice, till, in an evil hour (he had parted with all his poets), he bought at a stall a cheap edition of Shelley. It wakened the old spirit. He would emigrate. He would clear the forest and the jungle. He would grow corn by the Mississippi. But

he must see the South American mountains first; and so he sailed for Rio Janeiro. Thorndale greatly doubted to the last whether he had ever "worked his way round" to the farm he had talked of. Luxmore's character and career are ably and skilfully sketched; but we cannot say that we are especially struck by the specimens given of his poetry.

In the great steamer, as it lay off Southampton, Thorndale bade his friend farewell. He had loved him he tells us, as a brother, and an elder brother. Thorndale's pliant nature was plastic in those robust hands. Sadly depressed, he betook himself to a little cottage at Shanklin, once more alone but for the old companion — the box of books. It was Thorndale's especial misfortune that, with a native craving for some attached companion to dwell under the same roof, he was by circumstances always doomed to days of solitude. But a new interest now arose. Symptoms of disease, disregarded in the excitement of the last days with Luxmore, now forced themselves on his attention. Some business matter compelled him to write to his uncle, thus informing his relations at Sutton Manor, for the first time, that he had returned to England. Kind messages and regrets came in reply: Winifred especially chiding him for his unsocial habits. It seemed "a wild strain of irony." Yet the few lines she wrote wakened old feelings, never quite asleep. Surely she would come and see the poor invalid? So strong did the impression grow, that, catching sight one day of a female figure in the garden, bending over the flowers, he felt sure it must be Winifred; and watched breathlessly, with violently-beating heart, till she turned her face, and the delusion was dispelled. Still, for days he cherished the vain expectation that she

would come, and restore him, by her very presence, to life, and hope, and faith. *That* was all he needed.

If I could see thee, 'twould be well with me !

Now there came consultations with this and that great physician : and soon the death-warrant decidedly expressed. Then was a first moment of confusion and agony ; and then followed an indescribable calm. It was now all smooth water before him. He betook himself to his last retreat at Villa Scarpa ; but he did not see Winifred before he left England for ever. Kind letters followed him from her mother. Lady Moberly would come over to take care of him, with a doctor in either hand. Of course she never came. And now the last days are gliding over swiftly : —

The day is never long. I have, indeed, ceased to take note of the measurement of time. One hour is more genial than another ; thought flows more rapidly, or these damaged lungs breathe somewhat more freely at one time than another : but where the present hour stands in the series which makes up day and night, what the clock reports of the progress of time, I have ceased to ask myself. There is but one hour that the bell has to strike for me.

Yet life is not quite over, even after Thorndale has found his last harbor of refuge. Present incident proves the completion of past remembrance. The Third Book of the manuscript volume is entitled "Cyril, or the Modern Cistercian."

In watching a little point of beach which was visible from his terrace, Thorndale had often been struck by the figure of a youthful monk, wearing the white habit of the Cistercian order, who passed slowly by the sea-margin, and sometimes paused in thought. Thorndale had constructed a whole theory of his thinking and history, and began to feel towards him as towards a friend. At length,

in his ride, Thorndale passed two monks, one of whom had sunk exhausted by the wayside. He conveyed the monk to the monastery in his carriage, and recognized in him the Cistercian so often watched. A further surprise awaited him. On entering the Cistercian's cell, he recognized in him an old acquaintance — Cyril. Cyril had entered the Roman Catholic Church, through the gate of the monastery. He had sought a peaceful, pious, and harmonious life within those walls; and he assured Thorndale that he had found all he sought. His history had been a tragical one. Brought up in a pious family, he had been assailed by sceptical doubts. His father was an enthusiast for reformatory punishment. The house was full of books on the subject. And from these Cyril imbibed the notion that one grand end of all punishment should be the reformation of the criminal himself. To punish for mere revenge was unchristian and irrational. How, then, of God's punishments inflicted in a future life? The pious father appeared to claim for the human legislator principles more noble and enlightened than those he attributed to the Divine. *Eternal punishment* aims not at the reformation of the guilty. Cyril was plunged into all the miseries of doubt. And brought up in the conviction that unbelief was the extremest sin, his anguish was indescribable. He became restless, gloomy, morose. And so, leaving Oxford, Thorndale left him.

Thorndale was at Dolgelly, in Wales, when he learned that Cyril was at Barmouth, and rode over to see him. He met him, just come off the water. Cyril's joy at the meeting was extreme. They sat cheerfully down to supper. Cyril never had been so gay. At length, absently, he drew from the pocket of his rough greatcoat a large

mass of iron, the fluke of an old anchor. At the sight of it, suddenly recollecting himself, he burst into a violent flood of tears. He confessed to his friend that an accident only had prevented him from throwing himself into the sea, during the sail from which he had just returned. He had gone out with that purpose, driven to it by his agony of doubt, and (strange as it may seem) by the fear of death. His fear of death was such, that he longed to make a plunge and have it over. And amid all the misery of his scepticism, he says, surely with sad truth : —

I am quoted by my family and my friends as a monster of impiety and guilt. I am frowned upon, avoided, expostulated with, — and pious ministers reprove me — for intellectual pride!

We can well believe that a pious father or mother, deeply loving their son, would yet rather see him laid in his coffin than see him turn doubtful of their own simple faith. What malady makes a breach so total — what leads to a doom so fearful — as unbelief? But let it be remembered that in many cases it is a malady, a disease for which a man is no more guilty than for consumption or for typhus. No doubt there is a wilful blindness, a preference of falsehood to truth, a flippant, hateful self-sufficiency, in the case of some : and let these be held responsible. But surely there *are* earnest spirits, battling for the truth — shedding tears of blood because they cannot believe, though they long to do so. Let us be thankful that in almost every such case the disease is a temporary one. It will wear away. “Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness.” Unbelief is a crisis which must be passed through by the thinking human mind, as certainly as measles and whooping-cough by the human body. Of course a blockhead, who never thinks at all, will not be troubled by it. The

humble and earnest man comes out of it, with a faith grounded so deeply that it can never be shaken more. Let us pity, then, the young doubter: let us aid him by God's blessing: let us not accuse him, and so perhaps drive him to despair. The guilty unbelief is that of the man who knows in his conscience that he would rather not believe. There is another kind of want of faith which the Almighty will not condemn. It is that which utters the creed and the prayer together: "Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief."

The next morning Thorndale and Cyril were to have breakfasted together. But when Thorndale went to his lodgings, he was gone, without a word; and they met no more till they met in the Cistercian monastery.

After this meeting, Cyril sometimes visited Thorndale at the Villa Scarpa. Thorndale did not seek any account of the process by which the youth who could believe nothing, had passed into the monk who believed everything. No doubt it would have been the usual story of reaction commenced, and then a positive *appetite for belief* growing upon the man. In any case, belief had brought Cyril peace and rest. And the doctrine of purgatory had been to him a favorable distinction of the Church of Rome. *It* represented a reformatory nature even in punishment beyond the grave; and the young enthusiast fancied that a special revelation had been vouchsafed to him by the Saviour, that every soul that God has made should in some way be saved at last. And coming not frequently, stealing quietly up to the terrace with his *pax vobiscum*, Cyril visited Thorndale to the last. But Thorndale saw the Cistercian on the strip of beach no more.

Cyril had felt the difficulty which most thoughtful men

must feel, as to what conception should be formed of God : —

How personify the Infinite? I said to myself. Does not the notion of personality itself imply contrast, limitation, and must not a Person be therefore Finite? or how personify at all, but by borrowing from the creature, and framing an ideal out of human qualities?

At one moment my conception of God seemed grand and distinct and my whole soul was filled and satisfied with it. Suddenly I was startled and abashed when I traced in it too plainly the features of humanity. These I hastened to obliterate; and the whole image was then fading into terrible obscurity. I remember one day our common friend Luxmore saying, in his wild poetic manner, that the ordinary imagination of God was but the shadow of a man thrown upwards, — the image of our best and greatest, seen larger on the concave of the sky.

We remark upon this, that Luxmore, after all, was only stating in a poetical and somewhat exaggerated form, a great and fundamental religious truth. We are "created in the image of God:" and it is only because there is something in us which resembles God, that we are able to form any conception of Him and his character. But for this, we could no more conceive of God's attributes than a blind man, who never saw, can conceive of color. We, of course, are fallen creatures; and our blurred and blotted qualities bear only the faintest and farthest likeness to that Divine Image in which we were made. And further, it is true enough that when we kneel down to pray, we should only distract and dishearten ourselves by trying to form a conception of a Being in whose nature there are such elements as eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, invisibility; and by trying to feel that we are addressing *Him*. But was Luxmore entirely wrong when he said that the Hearer of prayer, to our weak minds, draws personality from a sublimed humanity? It is not a fable, that we know the

picture of a man's character and life set out in a certain simple story, Glad Tidings to all to whom it comes:—a man towards whom we can feel kindly sympathy and warm affection: a human being like ourselves: and we are told that He is "the image of the invisible God:" that when we picture Him to our hearts, we picture God—softened, but not degraded. We can see "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:" and in praying to God, we can feel as though the kind face were bent over us as we pray,—as though we were telling of our wants and sorrows to that kind and gentle heart. Do we desire to think clearly to whom we speak when we pray? We are chilled and overwhelmed when we think of infinite space and infinite time: it is not to an aggregate of such qualities as *these* that we can address heartfelt pleading. Let us think we are speaking to a sympathizing Man; and child-like, we can bend down our head upon the knee of Jesus of Nazareth, and breathe into His ear the story of our wants and woes. We have all that the grossest idolatry ever gave of clear conception; and yet our worship is not degraded, but sublimed.

Not so pleasing is the Fourth Book of Thorndale's manuscript, entitled "Seckendorf, or the Spirit of Denial." Long ago, in Switzerland, Thorndale found Seckendorf in the studio of Clarence, the Utopian artist. Seckendorf was a tall man, with gray hair and keen gray eyes, and advanced in years. He was by birth a German baron; but he was known in England as Doctor Seckendorf, an eminent physician and physiologist. In philosophy, he was just the opposite of Clarence: sceptical, sarcastic, hoping nothing. His philosophy was "firm as a rock, and as hard and barren." He held that what is excellent never can be common, because "higher excellence

is greater complication, and its manifestation must be more restricted, because a larger number of antecedent conditions are necessary for that manifestation." The Utopian's "good time coming," of universal goodness and happiness, could therefore never be. And Thorndale thought out a sad induction of facts in corroboration of the thing: —

There is more sea than land; three fourths of the globe are covered with salt water.

There is more barren land than fertile; much is sheer desert, or hopeless swamp; great part wild arid steppes, or land that can only be held in cultivation by incessant toil.

Where nature is most prolific, there is more weed and jungle than fruit and flower.

Of the animal creation, the lowest orders are by far the most numerous. The *infusoria*, and other creatures that seem to enjoy no other sensations than what are immediately connected with food and movement (if even these), far surpass all others in this respect. The tribes of insects are innumerable; the mammalia comparatively few.

Of the human inhabitants of the earth, the ethnologist tells us that the Mongolian race is the most numerous, which is not certainly the race in which the noblest forms of civilization have appeared. As in the tree there is more leaf than fruit, so in the most advanced nation of Europe there are more poor than rich, more ignorant than wise, more automatic laborers, the mere creatures of habit, than reasoning and reflective men.

We do not know whether the celebrated anonymous work, entitled *The Plurality of Worlds*, was published before Thorndale's death. If he had read it, he might have gathered from its eloquent and startling pages one instance more for his induction. He might have stated that there seems strong reason to believe that of all the orbs which have (if we may say so) blossomed in immensity, only one has arrived at fruit: that this earth is the only inhabited world in all the universe. The Creator works with a lavish hand. But as his works

grow nobler, they grow fewer. Scarcity, we all know, makes a thing more valuable: the converse holds as truly, that value makes a thing scarce.

The second chapter in this Fourth Book treats ingeniously and strikingly of the power of money; and also furnishes proof that Thorndale, like many men of his make, was not minutely accurate. The chapter is called "The Silver Shilling;" and over and over again we have *the silver shilling* repeated, as the type of money. Seckendorf tells us where he got the name: it was from "a poem by one Phillips, 'On the Silver Shilling.'" We know, of course, what Seckendorf is referring to; but there is no such poem as that he quotes. Most men who are tolerably well read in the poetry of the seventeenth century, have at least heard of John Phillips's poem, *The Splendid Shilling*, an amusing parody of the style of Milton: it sets out thus:—

Happy the man, who, void of care and strife,  
In silken or in leathern purse, retains  
A Splendid Shilling: he nor hears with pain,  
New oysters cried, nor sighs for cheerful ale.

Our shortening space forbids our offering our readers any account of Seckendorf's career, which Mr. Smith sketches with great liveliness and interest; or our noticing the topics which were discussed in council by Thorndale, Clarence, and Seckendorf. Seckendorf thought there is a general movement in England towards the Roman Catholic Church; and that it is not unlikely that the ragged urchin who is chalking up "No Popery" on the walls of London, may live to see High Mass performed in St. Paul's Cathedral. He maintained that fear is the root of all religion; the unseen root, even in the happiest Christians:—that "the pil-

lars of heaven are sunk in hell." We differ from him. We think that love and hope, rather than fear, are the guiding influences in the Christian life. We believe that though a great fear may be the thing that wakens a man up from total unconcern about religion, yet that the race once entered on, he treads "the way to Zion with *his face thitherward*;"—looking towards the home he seeks; and drawn by the hope before, rather than driven by the fear behind him.

Thorndale's Fifth Book is called "Clarence, or the Utopian." As the invalid was wearing down from day to day, one morning he was sitting in the gardens of the Villa Reale. There a group drew his attention, — a father, and, as it seemed, his little daughter. The father was evidently an Englishman: the little girl, with fair complexion and light hair, had the dark eye of the Italian. Thorndale recognized his old friend Clarence; but with characteristic reserve, he shrunk from making himself known. But he looked with kind feeling upon the little child; and mused, as Dr. Arnold had done before him, on a child's power to reawaken a parent's flagging interest in life. The beaten track is no longer monotonous: the circle of the year looks new. Thorndale thus mused: —

What beautiful things there are in life! joys that have come down to us pure and unstained from the times of the patriarchs. It is to me an eternal miracle to see the same roses year after year bloom as freshly as they did in Paradise. Plant this wedded happiness, plant these roses, in every rood of ground, ye who would improve the aspect of this world! but do not think you can change a single leaf of the plant itself.

Thorndale's idea had been anticipated. James Hedderwick thus excuses a new poem on the old theme of *Love*: —

The theme is old, — even as the flowers are old,  
That sweetly showed  
Their silver bosses and bright-budding gold  
Through Eden's sod; —  
And still peep forth through grass and garden mould,  
As fresh from God!

Happily Thorndale and Clarence met at last. The little girl, compassionating the wan look of the consumptive, offered him another day some flowers. Clarence followed her; and suddenly recognizing his old companion, "burst into tears like a woman." He and his little Julia were afterwards constant visitors at the Villa Scarpa; and all the beauty of the scene, which had been paling to the dying man's languid eye, suddenly revived. Morning after morning Clarence spent, painting the view from Thorndale's terrace. Julia was not his daughter: she was his adopted child. She was the daughter of an exiled Italian patriot who had come to England, married an English woman, settled down quietly in a little cottage on the borders of the New Forest, and supported himself as a sculptor. We trust that all our readers will make a point of perusing the chapter called "Julia Montini," in which the story of the exile, his wife and child, is related with exquisite grace and pathos. Very beautifully did the simple and untaught English girl tell Clarence how, as there gradually grew upon her the sense of the genius and refinement of the man she had married, she feared that he would cease to love her, so much above her as he was. She read and studied, hoping to make herself more worthy of him: but her fear proved idle; he never loved her less. It is indeed something of a disappointment for a husband to feel there are realms of thought to which *he* has access, but into which a gentle and loving wife cannot enter with him: but

tree ; Clarence stands near, painting ; Julia is busy gardening. And as Thorndale's hand turns too feeble to hold the pen, Clarence takes up his abandoned manuscript volume, and fills the remaining leaves with his own confession of faith. To notice *that* at all adequately, would demand an article of itself ; and we shall not attempt to do so. But we see our last of Thorndale as we have just described him. We leave him, now with very little to come of life, under the acacia-tree. There is now only the stillness of expectation upon that terrace that looks down upon the bay.

We should have been happier, we confess, had we left him with something better to support him at the last than philosophy, whether cynical or Utopian. Surely he had within himself, too sacred for common talk, a hope and a belief not to be paraded for Seckendorf's sarcasm ! Surely, when, in the last hours, the pictures of childhood came back, the perplexed and tempest-driven man was again the child that prayed by the little white bedside. We do not care if our readers should complain that the sermon peeps through the article — that the disguise of the reviewer does not quite conceal the gown and band. Let it be so : but in treating of such grave matters as those which this book suggests, we could not have forgiven ourselves had we failed to notice the book's essential defect. Holding the belief which we hold, we could not have written of the mystery of life, without reference to that which alone can read it.



## CHAPTER XII.

### CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.<sup>1</sup>

**M**R. CAIRD'S name is already known to the English public as that of the author of a sermon on *Religion in Common Life*, which was published two or three years ago by her Majesty's command. Every Sunday during her autumn sojourn at Balmoral, the Queen and court worship at the little parish church of Crathie; and at various times several of the most popular preachers of the Church of Scotland have there preached in the presence of royalty. Dr. Norman McLeod of Glasgow, Dr. Cumming, Mr. Stuart, of St. Andrew's, Edinburgh, and other eminent Scotch clergymen, have officiated at Crathie Church, and in more than one instance with so favorable an impression, that the manuscripts of the discourses have been required for the Queen's private perusal. But Mr. Caird was the first Scotch minister who received a royal command to give his sermon to the public; and indeed, with the exception of the Bishop of Oxford, the first preacher who had been so distinguished during her Majesty's reign. Many circumstances, apart from the merit of the discourse, contributed to secure for it a very large circulation in England as well as in Scot-

<sup>1</sup> *Sermons.* By the Rev. John Caird, M. A., Minister of the Park Church, Glasgow, Author of *Religion in Common Life*. Edinburgh 1858. London: Blackwoods. 1858.

land ; and we have been informed that no single sermon published in modern times has been so extensively read. Somewhere about a hundred thousand copies of it were exhausted in Britain : a still greater number were required for the United States, where our friends were eager to know what sort of religious instruction was approved by a queen ; and the sermon being translated into the German tongue, was republished in Germany with a recommendatory preface by the Chevalier Bunsen. At that period it became known for the first time to the English public that there had arisen in Scotland a new luminary ; a great pulpit orator who was held by many to be equal to any who had preceded him, Chalmers and Guthrie not being excepted. And the published sermon seemed almost to justify the enthusiasm of Mr. Caird's warmest admirers. We believe that among intelligent readers there was but one opinion of it, as an ingenious, eloquent, sensible, and interesting exposition of an important practical subject. Still, we have been told that some readers thought Mr. Caird's theology very defective ; and it is not long since we read a letter in a newspaper which is the organ of a small religious sect, in which Mr. Caird was sadly torn to pieces as lacking all spiritual insight and knowledge of the gospel doctrines. And the ingenious writer of that letter stated that nothing could be more mistaken than the popular belief that the Queen, in commanding the publication of Mr. Caird's sermon, intended to express her approval of it. On the contrary, her Majesty's purpose was (so the writer of the letter assures us) to make an appeal to the sympathies of the religious public, and to say, — "Pity me, my subjects ; here is a specimen of the kind of thing that I have to listen to in Scotland in autumn !"

### 336 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

Mr. Caird made his reputation as a preacher while minister of a church in Edinburgh, but about ten years since he retired from the bustle of a city clergyman's life to the country parish of Errol, in Perthshire. From his seclusion there he occasionally emerged to preach in the large towns of Scotland, and far from being forgotten or lost sight of in his country retirement, his popularity appeared ever on the increase. Whenever he preached in Edinburgh or Glasgow, the crowds that followed him had hardly been equalled since the great days of Dr. Chalmers; and the fame to which *Religion in Common Life* attained did not surpass the expectations of his Scotch admirers. A few months since Mr. Caird, now a clergyman of thirteen years' experience, was transferred from his country parish to the beautiful church recently erected in the West-end Park at Glasgow, to which we are sorry to see its builders were too Protestant to give a saint's name. There, with undiminished fire and unslackening popularity, Mr. Caird preaches twice every Sunday. The stranger in Glasgow, if he wanders on Sunday afternoon in the direction of the Park, will see a well-dressed eager crowd hurrying towards the Park Church; and we understand that so overcrowded was the building at Mr. Caird's first coming, that it has been found necessary to furnish the congregation with tickets, no one being admitted without producing one. Mr. Caird, we believe is of opinion that in order to produce its full impression, a sermon ought not to be read, but to be delivered as if given *extempore*; but as the labor of committing a discourse to memory is great, he reads his forenoon discourse, and delivers without any manuscript that which he preaches in the afternoon. The afternoon appearance is thus the great one, and it is to that service that strangers who wish

CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER. 337

to hear the eminent preacher generally go. And although it is in the nature of things impossible that a great orator should be always at his best, we believe that hardly any one who goes to hear Mr. Caird of an afternoon, however high his expectations may have been, returns disappointed.

Let us suppose that by the kindness of some Glasgow acquaintance we have succeeded in procuring tickets of admission to the Park Church. In the midst of a throng which has converged from many points to the steep ascent which leads up to it, we approach the stately Gothic building, with its massive tower, which, standing on an elevated ridge of ground, looks on either hand over the distant din of thronging streets beneath to the quiet country hills far away. We find our way into the church, and we have time to look around us, for there is still half an hour before service begins. Is this really a Presbyterian church? What would John Knox say to it? For all the light within is the "dim religious light" of the cathedral, mellowed in its passage through the windows of stained glass: there is the lofty vaulted roof of richly carved oak, and the double line of shafts parting the side aisles: far up, the amber-tinted clerestory windows throw shafts of sunset color upon the oaken beams; and in the distance—for the church is a very long one—there is nothing less than a spacious chancel, parted from the church by a lofty pointed arch, partly filled up by a traceried screen of stone. And at the extremity of the chancel, but (something lacking still) at the *west* end of the church, there is an altar-window, whose fair proportions and rich tracery might have been designed by Pugin. No galleries cut these graceful shafts, and the seats are not pews, but open benches of oak. There is no organ,

and no altar ; but directly in front of the chancel a plain pulpit of oak.

It is just two o'clock. Every seat is crowded, and the passages have gradually filled with people who are content to stand. And as the last tones of the bell have died away Mr. Caird ascends the pulpit, wearing, as Scotch ministers do, the black silk preaching-gown and cassock. His appearance is natural and unaffected. Of the middle size, with dark complexion and long black hair, good but not remarkable forehead, a somewhat careworn and anxious expression, and looking like a retiring and hard-wrought student of eight-and-thirty — there we have Mr. Caird. He begins the service by reading the psalm which is to be sung, and we are struck at once by the solemnity and depth of his voice, and we feel already something of the indescribable charm there is about the whole man. The psalm is sung by a choir so efficient that the lack of the organ is hardly felt. Then the minister rises, and the whole congregation standing, offers a prayer. The Church of Scotland has no liturgy, and every clergyman has to prepare his own prayers. These are commonly understood to be given extemporaneously, and generally they are extemporaneous ; but as we listen to those sentences, uttered with so much feeling, solemnity, quietude, and fluency, we soon know that the prayers, filled with happy turns of expression, containing many phrases and sentences borrowed from the Liturgy, and some (or we are much mistaken) translated from the Missal, and all conceived and expressed in the simple, beautiful liturgical spirit, have been, if not written, at least most carefully thought over at home. At one time Mr. Caird's prayers were ambitious and oratorical ; but now their perfect simplicity tells of more mature judg-

ment and taste. We cannot say whether the congregation has so far mastered the essential difficulty of unliturgical common prayer as to be properly joining in those petitions ; but the perfect stillness, the silence and stirlessness that prevail in church, testify that the congregation is at all events intently listening. The prayer is over — only a quarter of an hour. Then a lesson from Scripture is read, chosen at the discretion of the clergyman ; then a psalm is sung ; then comes the sermon. You cannot doubt, as you see the people arranging themselves for fixed attention, what portion of the worship of God is thought in Scotland the most important. The service in that country is essentially one of instruction rather than one of devotion. The text is read ; it is generally such as we feel at once to be a suggestive one ; it is sometimes striking, but never odd or strange. Then Mr. Caird begins his sermon. He has no manuscript before him, not a shred of what the humbler Scotch call *paper*, and abhor as they abhor a vestige of Rome ; but who could for a moment be misled into imagining those felicitous sentences extemporaneous, or that masterly symmetrical discussion of the subject, so ingenious, so thoughtful, so rich in fine illustration, rising several times in the course of the sermon into a fervid rush of eloquence that you hold your breath to listen to — the excogitation of the moment ? In hearing Mr. Caird you have nothing to *get over*. There is nothing that detracts from the general effect ; none of those disagreeable peculiarities and awkwardnesses in utterance, in gesture, in appearance, in mode of thought, which grievously detract from the pleasure with which we listen to many distinguished speakers till we get accustomed to them, and learn to forget their defects in their merits and

beauties. He begins quietly, but in a manner which is full of earnestness and feeling; every word is touched with just the right kind and degree of emphasis; many single words, and many little sentences which when you recall them do not seem very remarkable, are given in tones which make them absolutely thrill through you: you feel that the preacher has in him the elements of a tragic actor who would rival Kean. The attention of the congregation is riveted; the silence is breathless; and as the speaker goes on gathering warmth till he becomes impassioned and impetuous, the tension of the nerves of the hearer becomes almost painful. There is abundant ornament in style—if you were cooler you might probably think some of it carried to the verge of good taste; there is a great amount and variety of the most expressive, apt, and seemingly unstudied gesticulation: it is rather as though you were listening to the impulsive Italian speaking from head to foot, than to the cool and unexcitable Scot. After two or three such climaxes, with pauses between, after the manner of Dr. Chalmers, the preacher gathers himself up for his peroration, which, with the tact of the orator, he has made more striking, more touching, more impressive than any preceding portion of his discourse. He is wound up often to an excitement which is painful to see. The full deep voice, so beautifully expressive, already taxed to its utmost extent, breaks into something which is almost a shriek; the gesticulation becomes wild; the preacher, who has hitherto held himself to some degree in check, seems to abandon himself to the full tide of his emotion: you feel that not even his eloquent lips can do justice to the rush of thought and feeling within. Two or three minutes in this impassioned strain and the sermon is done. A few moments of start-

ling silence; you look round the church; every one is bending forward with eyes intent upon the pulpit; then there is a general breath and stir. You think the sermon has lasted about ten minutes; you consult your watch—it has lasted three quarters of an hour. If you are an enthusiastic Anglican you say to yourself, “Well, that comes to the mark of Melvill or Bishop Wilberforce.” If an enthusiastic Scotch churchman, you say to yourself, “Well, I suppose Chalmers was better; but *I* never heard preaching like it, save from Guthrie or Norman McLeod.”

Then follow a brief collect, a hymn, and the benediction; and you come away, having heard the great Scotch preacher. We may very fitly call him so; for except Dr. Guthrie and Dr. McLeod, there is no one whom the popular judgment of Scotland in general places near Mr. Caird. And though every district of Scotland and every town has its popular preacher—and though many congregations have each their own favorite clergyman whom they prefer to all others—still the very best that the warmest admirers of other Scotch ministers can find to say of them is, that they are better than Mr. Caird. He is the Scotch Themistocles. Even those who would place another preacher first, place Mr. Caird second.

It is rarely indeed that we find such a remarkable combination in one individual of the qualities which go to make an effective pulpit orator. Mr. Caird's mind has the knack of producing the precise kind of thought which shall be at once worthy of the attention of the best educated and most refined, and effective when addressed to a mixed congregation. And *that* is the practical talent for the preacher, after all. No depth, originality, or power of thought will make up in a sermon for the absence of general interest. No thought or style is

## 342 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

good in the pulpit, which is tiresome. There is an insufferable but lofty order of thought, which you listen to with an effort, feel to be extremely fine, and cease listening to as soon as possible. John Foster, who scattered congregations, was beyond doubt an abler preacher than Mr. Caird ; but he *did* scatter congregations, and therefore he was not a good preacher, finely as his published discourses read. There are other preachers who attract crowds by preaching sermons which revolt every one who possesses good sense or good taste ; but in distinction alike from the good unpopular preacher and the bad popular preacher, Mr. Caird has the talent to produce at will an order of thought elevated enough to please the most cultivated, and interesting enough to attract the masses. He has a good foundation of metaphysical acumen and power ; strong practical sense ; then great powers in the way of happy and striking illustration ; indeed, he traces analogies between the material and the spiritual with a felicity which reminds us of Archbishop Whately. Mr. Caird has also that invaluable gift of the orator — a capacity of intense feeling ; he can throw his whole soul into what he says, with an emotion which is contagious. Further, he has a remarkably telling and expressive voice, and a highly effective dramatic manner. Add to all these qualifications that, from natural bent, fostered and encouraged by unequalled success from his first entering the church, he has devoted himself steadfastly to the single end of becoming a great and distinguished preacher. That end he has completely attained. For at least ten years he has held in Scotland the position which he now holds ; and the fortunate incident of his preaching at Crathie extended his reputation beyond the limits of Scotland. Mr. Caird is certainly the most

generally popular preacher in the Scotch Church, and he deserves his popularity. We cannot, of course, go into the question of mute inglorious Miltons, and of flowers born to blush unseen. It is possible enough that among the Cumberland hills, or in curacies like Sydney Smith's on Salisbury Plain, or wandering sadly by the shore of Shetland fiords, there may be men who have in them the makings of better preachers than Bishop Wilberforce, Mr. Melvill, Dr. McLeod, or Mr. Caird. Of course there may be Folletts that never held a brief, Angelos that never built St. Peter's, and Vandycks who never got beyond their sixpence a day. There may be, of course, and there may not be; and what *is known* must for practical purposes be taken for what *is*.

It may readily be supposed that the announcement of a forthcoming volume of sermons by so distinguished a preacher did not fail to excite much interest in the district where he is best known. Little Tom Eaves, who at different times has given Mr. Thackery so much valuable information, assured us, on his return from a recent visit to Edinburgh, that the eminent publishers who have sent forth this volume, were content to give for its copyright a sum which, for a volume of sermons, was quite extraordinary — as much, in fact, as Sir Walter Scott received for *Marmion*. Mr. Caird's book is sure to have many readers. Many educated people in England will feel curious to know what sort of preaching is at a premium in the Scotch Church, where many things are so different from what they are among us. And we think we have been able to trace one or two indications in the volume, that Mr. Caird had an English audience in view. On at least two occasions we find the word *Sunday* ("a *Sunday* meditation," "*Sunday-school* teachers,") where

#### 344 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

we are mistaken if most Scotch preachers would not have employed the word *Sabbath*, which is in almost universal use north of the Tweed. But in Scotland, no doubt, Mr. Caird will find the great majority of his readers. Numbers of people who have listened to the fiery orator will be anxious to find whether the discourses which struck them so much when aided by the accessories of a wonderfully telling manner, will stand the severer test of a quiet perusal at home. So here is Mr. Caird's volume.

Here, then, we have the spent thunderbolts, motionless and cold. Here we have the locomotive engine, which tore along at sixty miles an hour, with the fire raked out and the steam gone down. Here, in short, we have the sermons of the great Scotch pulpit orator, stripped of the fire, the energy, the eloquent voice, the abundant gesticulation, which did so much to give them their charm when delivered and heard. There is but one story told as to the share which *manner* has always had in producing the practical effect which has been felt in listening to all great orators, from Demosthenes to Chalmers. Manner has always been the first, second, and third thing; and Mr. Caird could not publish his manner. We can examine his sermons calmly, and make up our mind about their merits deliberately, now. To do so was quite impossible while we were hurried away by the rushing eloquence of the living voice.

No doubt, then, this volume will disappoint the less intelligent class of Mr. Caird's admirers, who expect to be as deeply impressed in reading these discourses as they were in hearing them. No words standing quietly on the printed page can possibly have the effect of the same words spoken by the human voice, with immense feeling,

and with all the arts of oratory. To expect that they should have an equal effect is to expect that the sword laid upon the table should cut as deeply as it did when grasped in a strong and skilful swordsman's hand. Mr. Caird's manner we know is a remarkably effective one; and of course the better the speaker's manner, the more his speech loses by being dissociated from it.

Still, after making every deduction, they are noble sermons; and we are not sure but that, with the cultivated reader, they will gain rather than lose by being read, not heard. There is a thoughtfulness and depth about them which can hardly be appreciated, unless when they are studied at leisure; and there are many sentences so felicitously expressed that we should grudge being hurried away from them by a rapid speaker, without being allowed to enjoy them a second time. And Mr. Caird, we feel as we read his pages, has succeeded in attaining a great end: he has shown that it is possible to produce sermons which shall be immensely popular, and popular with all classes of people: while yet all shall be so chaste and correct that the most fastidious taste could hardly take exception to a single word or phrase. In Mr. Caird's sermons there is nothing extravagant or eccentric either in thought or style. There is nothing unworthy of the clergyman and the scholar. There are no claptrap expedients to excite attention; nothing merely designed to make an audience gape; nothing that could possibly produce a titter. The solemnity of the house of God is never forgotten. Mr. Caird has no peculiar views, no special system of theology: he preaches the moderate and chastened Calvinism of the Church of Scotland,—precisely the doctrine of the Thirty-Nine Articles. He does not tell his hearers that the world is coming to an end; he finds nothing about

Louis Napoleon in the Book of Revelation ; he does not select queer texts, or out of the way topics for discussion. It is no small matter to have proved in this age of pulpit drowsiness on the one hand, and pulpit extravagance on the other, that sound and temperate doctrine, logical accuracy, and classical language are quite compatible with great popularity. It is pleasant to find that discourses which are thoroughly manly and free from sentimentalism or cant prove attractive to a class which is too ready to run after such preachers as Mr. Charles Honeyman ; and that sensible and judicious views, set forth in a style which is always scholarly and correct, and enforced by a manner in which there is no acting, howling, ventriloquizing, or gymnastic posturing, can hold vast crowds in a rapt attention, which would please even that slashing critic of the pulpit, *Habitans in Sicco*. Wide as the poles apart is such popularity as that of Mr. Caird from such popularity as that of Mr. Spurgeon and his class. It is very often with contempt and indignation that people of sense and taste listen to "popular preachers." No doubt such preachers may be well fitted to please and even to profit the great multitude who have little sense and no taste at all ; but it is a fresh and agreeable sensation to the reviewer when he discovers a man whose eminence as a preacher is the sequel to a brilliant career at the University ; whose sermons indicate a mind stored with the fruits of extensive reading and study ; who shrinks instinctively from whatever is coarse or grotesque ; who abhors all claptrap ; who is perfectly simple and sincere without a trace of self-consciousness ; in whose composition there is nothing spasmodic, nothing aiming to be subtle and succeeding in being unintelligible ; and who seems, so far as it is possible to judge, to be actuated by

an earnest desire to impress religious truth upon the minds of his hearers. And, indeed, when we think what is the great end of the preacher's endeavors, we feel that all mere literary qualities and graces are of no account whatever when compared with the presence of that efficacious element in the sermon which makes it such as that it shall be the means of saving souls. For ourselves, we should prefer a thousand times the magic spell which Miss Marsh (all honor to the name) exercised at Sydenham over *English Hearts*, to the church-crowding eloquence of Chalmers. And in that solemn sense, perhaps the greatest of all English preachers is the homely, pithy, earnest Mr. Ryle.

We confess that we do not think sermons, generally speaking, by any means attractive reading; and we have not read a sufficient number of them to be able to institute a comparison between the printed sermons of Mr. Caird and those of other distinguished preachers. Still, we may say that we do not find in Mr. Caird the originality of Mr. Melvill, or the talent of that eminent divine for eliciting from his text a great amount of striking and unexpected instruction. There is nothing of the daring ingenuity and the novel interpretations of Archbishop Whately. Mr. Caird will never found a school of disciples, like Dr. Arnold; nor startle steady-going old clergymen, like Mr. Robertson of Brighton. He is so clear and comprehensible that he will not, like Mr. Maurice, make many readers feel or fancy the presence of something very fine, if they could only be sure what the preacher would be at. He hardly sets a scene before us in such life-like reality as does Dr. Guthrie. And although people may go to hear him for the intellectual treat, they will never go to be amused, as by Mr. Spur-

geon. He will never point a sentence at the expense of due solemnity, like a great Scotch preacher who contrasted men's profession and their practice by saying, "Profession says, 'On this hang the law and the prophets;' Practice says, 'Hang the law and the prophets!'" He will not, like Mr. Cecil, arrest attention by beginning his sermon, "A man was hanged this morning at Tyburn;" nor like Rowland Hill, by exclaiming "Matches! matches! matches!" — nor like somebody or other by saying as he wiped his face, "It's damned hot!" — nor like Whitefield, by vociferating "Fire! fire — in hell!" He will not imitate Sterne, who read out as his text, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting;" and then exclaimed, as the first words of his discourse, "That I deny!" — making it appear in a little while that such was not the preacher's own sentiment, but what might be supposed to be the reflection of an irreligious man. He will never introduce into his discourses long dialogues and arguments between God and Satan, in which the latter is made to exhibit a deficiency in logical power which is, to say the least, remarkable in one who is believed not to lack intellect. He will not appear in the pulpit with his shirt-sleeves turned back over his cassock, in ball-room fashion; and after giving out his text, astonish the congregation by bellowing, "Now, you young men there, listen to my sermon, and don't stare at my wrists!" All such arts for attracting or compelling interest and attention Mr. Caird eschews.

And when we read his sermons, though we feel their interest, we find it hard to say in what it lies. They are admirable sermons: but we should scarcely, *à priori*, have ventured to predict their vast popular effect. The

finely-linked thought, the completeness and symmetry of the discussion, the beautifully appropriate illustrations, none stuck in for ornament, but all *bonâ fide* illustrating the subject; the general sobriety and good sense:—these are literary characteristics which we should say would prove hardly discernible, and certainly not appreciable, save by people of considerable cultivation. Must we, then, fall back upon Manner, and suppose that the charm which gives these sermons their popular effect lies in a great measure in the touching and thrilling tones, the tears in the voice, the enchaining earnestness, with which they are poured forth by an orator who, like Whitefield, could almost melt an audience to tears by saying *Mesopotamia*? Or may we not rather ask whether Mr. Caird, in his elaborate and fastidious preparation of these discourses for the press, has not cut out, or smoothed down, much which was most striking when the sermons were preached, but which might have appeared of doubtful taste when they were carefully and critically read over? Perhaps these sermons, while gaining in *finish* and perfection of literary construction, have lost some of the salient points, the roughness and raciness, which added to their piquancy when delivered. We have heard Mr. Caird preach two of those now published; and we find he has drawn his pen through several of those phrases which had stuck longest and most vividly in our memory. We think he has erred here. He has been over-cautious, over-fastidious. It is on the very borderland of good taste that the deepest popular impression is made: and there was no fear of Mr. Caird's crossing the border. And we believe that upon ordinary Sundays, by discourses of much less elaborate preparation, he produces even a greater effect upon his congregation than could be

### 350 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

produced by any sermon in this volume, were it preached exactly as it is printed.

The published discourses are certainly very ambitious in thought and style. There is a want of repose in them; and when two or three are read successively, the effect upon the mind is a little wearisome. But no doubt they were written to be preached; and when they are listened to one at a time, and at intervals of a week, this result will not follow. It is well to have the attention riveted and the nerves tightened for half an hour in the week: but the process becomes painful when it lasts too long. We remark a little mannerism here and there. An extraordinary number of paragraphs begin with the word *Now*: and the term *yearning* is, we think, of much too frequent occurrence. The result of the abundant use of this word, and of the occasional heaping up of adjectives unconnected by any copulative, and of nearly the same meaning, is to leave an occasional impression of an excess of the *gushing* element. There is the least shade here and there of the cant of the present day about "the response of our deepest nature," — its "instinctive throb," and its "instinctive yearnings," — phrases which to plain folk mean just nothing at all. We confess that we do not like the word *fair* several times applied to the Almighty — "the alone Infinitely True and Holy and Fair." The word suggests ideas which are not in harmony with so solemn an application of it. And as we are fault-finding at any rate, we may here state that in all the volume there is but a single passage which appears to us to be in glaringly and painfully bad taste: so much and so disagreeably so that we wonder that Mr. Caird should have published it. It is that passage in which heaven is described as a place —

where, heart to heart with God, happy souls revel unsated, undazzled, in the Essential Element of Love.

The description appears to us most irreverent, and its entire strain most unbecoming. Mr. Spurgeon could hardly have said anything worse. We have drawn the pen through it in our copy, that our pleasure in reading the volume may not be interrupted by its jarring and irritating effect; and we trust that in the future editions which are sure to be wanted, Mr. Caird will strike the entire passage out. It is most unworthy of him.

We do not know whether Mr. Caird was accustomed to preach such sermons as those now published to his country congregation. There are many phrases and sentences in them which to rustics would be quite unintelligible. What could a ploughman make of the following question:—

What elements must we eliminate from suffering caused by sin in forming our ideal of suffering purity? — (p. 171.)

But as we know that Madame Rachel, by her wonderfully expressive gesticulation, succeeded, while in Russia, in making her meaning intelligible to people who did not understand the language which she spoke, so Mr. Caird may have been able to get country folk to understand the general drift of sentences containing many words whose sense they did not know. And indeed the late Hugh Miller maintains that sermons which are in a considerable degree *over the heads* of a rural congregation, are the most likely both to interest and improve them.

By this time, we doubt not, our readers are impatient of our remarks, and would like to hear Mr. Caird speak for himself. We proceed to give a more specific account of the contents of the volume.

It contains eleven sermons, the fourth being divided into two parts, intended, we presume, to be preached at different times; and a glance at the Table of Contents at once makes us suspect that the sermons have, with a view to publication, been materially changed from what they were when they were preached. Sermons in Scotland, as in England, have a sort of average length, from which they do not deviate materially except on extraordinary occasions. But while Mr. Caird's first sermon occupies forty pages, the second occupies only twenty-five, the fourth twenty, and the fifth thirteen. The first sermon is thus three times as long as the fifth, and twice as long as the fourth. So if the fifth sermon be of the standard Scotch length of three quarters of an hour, the first would occupy in the delivery two hours and a quarter. Or if the first sermon is to be taken as the standard, the fifth would crumple up into the "just fifteen minutes."

The subject of the first sermon is *The Self-evidencing Nature of Divine Truth*; its text is, "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (2 Cor. iv. 2.) It is a scholarly and masterly production; but the thought which forms its staple is more severe than is usual in Mr. Caird's discourses. It is, in short, a view set out with consummate tact and ingenuity, of the internal evidence of the truth of the Christian religion. We should ask our university men and our clergy to read this sermon the first. They will find in it a strict and unerring logic, great skill in simplifying and illustrating abstract ideas, and a style which could scarcely be improved. But when we pass to the discourse which stands next in order we find much clearer indications of the power of the popular orator.

## CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER. 353

It is on *Self-Ignorance*; the text, "Who can understand his errors." (Psalm xix. 12.) We almost wonder in reading the former sermon how Mr. Caird can be so popular; but when we read this, more especially if we have heard Mr. Caird preach, and can imagine the fashion in which he would deliver many passages, we have less difficulty in understanding the matter. Here is the introduction, which would arrest attention at once:—

Of all kinds of ignorance, that which is the most strange, and, in so far as it is voluntary, the most culpable, is our ignorance of self. For not only is the subject in this case that which might be expected to possess for us the greatest interest, but it is the one concerning which we have amplest facilities and opportunities of information. Who of us would not think it a strange and unaccountable story, could it be told of any man now present, that for years he had harbored under his roof a guest whose face he had never seen—a constant inmate of his home, who was yet to him altogether unknown? It is no supposition however, but an unquestionable fact, that to not a few of us, from the first moment of existence there has been present, not beneath the roof, but within the breast, a mysterious resident, an inseparable companion, nearer to us than friend or brother, yet of whom after all we know little or nothing. What man of intelligence amongst us would not be ashamed to have had in his possession for years some rare or universally admired volume with its leaves uncut? or to be the proprietor of a repository filled with the most exquisite productions of genius, and the rarest specimens in science and art, which yet he himself never thought of entering? Yet surely no book so worthy of perusal, no chamber containing objects of study so curious, so replete with interest for us, as that which seldom or never attracts our observation—the book, the chamber of our own hearts. We sometimes reproach with folly those persons who have travelled far and seen much of distant countries, and yet have been content to remain comparatively unacquainted with their own. But how venial such folly compared with that of ranging over all other departments of knowledge, going abroad with perpetual inquisitiveness over earth and sea and sky, whilst there is a little world within the breast which is still to us an unexplored region. Other scenes and objects we can study only at intervals: they are not always accessible, or can be reached only by long and laborious

## 354 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

journeys; but the bridge of consciousness is soon crossed — we have but to close the eye and withdraw the thoughts from the world without in order at any moment to wander through the scenes and explore the phenomena of the still more wondrous world within. To examine other objects delicate and elaborate instruments are often necessary: the researches of the astronomer, the botanist, the chemist, can be prosecuted only by means of rare and costly apparatus; but the power of reflection, that faculty more wondrous than any mechanism which art has ever fashioned, is an instrument possessed by all — the poorest and most illiterate alike with the most cultured and refined have at their command an apparatus by which to sweep the inner firmament of the soul, and bring into view its manifold phenomena of thought and feeling and motive. And yet with all the unequalled facilities for acquiring this sort of knowledge, can it be questioned that it is the one sort of knowledge that is most commonly neglected, and that, even amongst those who would disdain the imputation of ignorance in history or science or literature, there are multitudes who have never acquired the merest rudiments of the knowledge of self?

By no means a far-fetched or difficult idea, the reader must see; and turned in many lights and brought out by a throng of illustrations; but a good and natural introduction to a sermon on self-ignorance, and quite sure, if given with a sort of *extempore* air, as if each successive comparison struck the speaker just at the moment, to get the people to listen with great stillness.

Then, restricting his view to the matter of a man's moral defects, Mr. Caird goes on to point out several reasons why the sinful man does not "understand his errors." The first is, that sin can be truly measured only when it is resisted. This principle indeed holds good of all forces: —

The rapid stream flows smooth and silent when there are no obstacles to stay its progress; but hurl a rock into its bed, and the roar and surge of the arrested current will instantly reveal its force. You cannot estimate the wind's strength when it rushes over the open plain; but when it reaches and wrestles with the trees of the forest, or lashes the sea into fury, then, resisted, you perceive its power. Or if, amid the ice-bound regions of the north, an altogether unbroken continuous

winter prevailed, comparatively unnoticed would be its stern dominion; but it is the coming round of a more genial season, when the counteracting agency of the sun begins to prevail, that reveals, by the melting of the solid masses of ice, and by the universal stir and crash, the intensity of the bygone winter's cold.

The second reason is, that sin often makes a man afraid to know himself. The third, that sinful habits steal on men slowly and gradually. The fourth, that as character gradually deteriorates, there is a parallel deterioration of the standard by which we judge it. Such are the "heads" of the sermon, as they are called in Scotland. They are all very clearly brought out and abundantly illustrated, and the sermon ends with a stirring "practical application."

It is possible now to seek the peace of self-forgetfulness, — to refuse to be disturbed, — to sink for a little longer into our dream of self-satisfaction; but it is a peace as transient as it is unreal. Soon, at the latest, and all the more terrible for the delay, the awakening must come. There are sometimes sad awakenings from sleep in this world. It is very sad to dream by night of vanished joys, — to revisit old scenes, and dwell once more among the unforgotten forms of our loved and lost, — to see in the dreamland the old familiar look, and hear the well-remembered tones of a voice long hushed and still, and then to wake with the morning light to the aching sense of our loneliness again. It were very sad for the poor criminal to wake from sweet dreams of other and happier days, — days of innocence, and hope, and peace, when kind friends, and a happy home, and an honored or unstained name were his, — to wake in his cell on the morning of his execution to the horrible recollection that all this is gone for ever, and that to-day he must die a felon's death. But inconceivably more awful than any awakening which earthly daybreak has ever brought, shall be the awakening of the self-deluded soul when it is roused in horror and surprise from the dream of life — to meet Almighty God in judgment!

Of course all this has been very often said before; but probably those who heard Mr. Caird declaim these sentences, thought that it had never before been said so forcibly.

The third sermon is upon *Spiritual Influence*. Its text is that passage in the Saviour's speech to Nicodemus, "The wind bloweth where it listeth," &c. (S. John iii. 7, 8.) Here the preacher argues in defence of the Christian doctrine of Regeneration, maintaining that whatever difficulties surround that doctrine have their parallel in Nature. The "heads" here are three. The analogy between Nature and Revelation is traced in regard to *Supernaturalness*, *Sovereignty*, or *apparent Arbitrariness*, and *Secrecy*. The gist of the first head is given in a sentence towards its close : —

If not the slightest movement of matter can take place without the immediate agency of God, shall we wonder that His agency is needed in the higher and more subtle processes of mind ?

The burden of the second head is given thus : —

Marvel not nor be disquieted at your inability to explain the laws that regulate the operations of an infinite agent; for in a province much more within the range of human observation there are familiar agents at work, the operations of which are equally inscrutable, arbitrary, incalculable. Think it not strange that the ways of the Spirit of God are unaccountable to a mind by which even the common phenomena of the wind are irreducible to law.

Then, under the third division of the discourse, Mr. Caird shows that the fact that the Holy Spirit works unseen is no reason for doubting that he does really act : —

As you have surveyed the face of nature in some tranquil season, — the unbreathing summer noon or the hushed twilight hour, — every feature of the landscape has seemed suffused with calmness, every tree hung its motionless head, every unrippled brook crept on with almost inaudible murmuring, every plant, and flower, and leaf seemed as if bathed in repose. But anon you perhaps perceived a change passing over the scene, as if at the bidding of some invisible power; — a rushing sound, as of music evoked by invisible fingers from the harp of nature, began to fill your ear; the leaves began to quiver and rustle,

CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER. 357

the trees to bend and shake, the stream to dash onward with ruffled breast and brawling sound, and from every wood, and glade, and glen, there came forth the intimation that a new and most potent agent was abroad and working around you. And yet while you marked the change on the face of nature, did you perceive the agent that effected it? Did the wind of heaven take visible form and appear as a winged messenger of God's will, hurrying hither and thither from object to object? Do you know and can you describe the way in which he worked,—how his touch fell upon the flowret and bade it wave, or his grasp seized the sturdy oak and strove with it till it quivered and bent? No, you cannot. You have not penetrated so far into the secrets of nature. You have seen only the effects, but not the agent or the process of his working. You have seen the wind's influences, but not itself. But do you therefore marvel, or hesitate to believe, that it has indeed been abroad and working over the face of the earth? or do you ever doubt whether there be any such agent as the wind at all? No; you have heard the sound thereof, you have witnessed the stir and commotion of nature that told of its presence, and so you believe in its existence, though you "cannot tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth."

The three "heads" having been illustrated, the sermon is wound up by various practical inferences, given at considerable length.

The fourth sermon is from the text, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared him." (S. John i. 18.) It is divided into two parts, the subject of the former being *The Invisible God*, and that of the latter *The Manifestation of the Invisible God*. The preacher, having dwelt upon the fact that God is invisible to human eyes, and shown that not without destroying the character of our present state of being as a state of trial and training could the case be otherwise; goes on to show that the Saviour, by his person, his life and character, his sufferings and death, is a visible manifestation of the invisible God.

We believe that this sermon, when preached, was a

very effective one ; and probably the view which it sets out struck many ordinary hearers as novel and original. It is not, however, necessary to tell the well-informed reader that Mr. Caird has here done nothing more than present, in a somewhat more popular and rhetorical form, the substance of a sermon upon the same text by Archbishop Whately, which, being detached from its text, is now published in the first series of the Archbishop's Essays.<sup>1</sup> The reader will find it interesting to do what we have done since writing the last sentence, — to peruse the two sermons together, and compare them. The Archbishop's sermon was addressed to a learned audience : it was preached before the University of Oxford ; and accordingly it is the more critical and philosophical. Mr. Caird intended his sermon to be preached to ordinary congregations, and accordingly he quotes no Greek, and lengthens out his remarks upon those parts of his subject which most admit of popular illustration. Some observations early in the discourse, on the Invisibility of the Almighty, appear to have been suggested by Letter VI. in Foster's Essay, *On a Man writing Memoirs of Himself*, in which that topic is discussed with a power unparalleled in theological literature. And whoever wishes to find *The Manifestation of the Invisible God* through the personal Redeemer set out in a very interesting fashion, may find it in the first two chapters of a book of so popular a character as Jacob Abbott's *Corner-Stone*. The view taken by Abbott is precisely that of Archbishop Whately, as may be inferred from the motto prefixed to the first chapter, which is, "The glory

<sup>1</sup> *Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion. Essay II. "On the Declaration of God in His Son,"* pp. 98-118. Edition of 1856.

of God in the face of Jesus Christ." It does not appear, however, that Abbott was acquainted with the Archbishop's discourse.

Although we cannot give Mr. Caird the credit of having thought out the idea which is pressed in this sermon, still he is entitled to the praise of having grasped it with great force, and of having set it forth in a discourse which would produce a strong popular effect. It must be said, however, that the style of this sermon is ambitious to a somewhat extravagant degree; in taste and accuracy it is very inferior to several of the other sermons in the volume. We should judge it to have been a comparatively juvenile production, which its author has got so fond of that he cannot now try it by the same severe standard as his recent compositions. And we are not sure if the phrase, *a woe that Deity could feel*, contains very sound theology. Deity can feel nothing like woe.

The sermon which comes next is, we think, one of the most eloquent in the book: it contains, perhaps, finer passages than any other. And although it is highly wrought up in several parts, there is not a word in it to which the severest critic could take exception. It is on *The Solitariness of Christ's Sufferings*: the text, "I have trodden the wine-press alone." It sets out with the following beautiful and natural introduction:—

There is always a certain degree of solitude about a great mind. Even a mere human being cannot rise preëminently above the level of his fellow-men without becoming conscious of a certain solitariness of spirit gathering round him. The loftiest intellectual elevation, indeed, is nowise inconsistent with a genial openness and simplicity of nature, nor is there anything impossible or unexampled in the combination of a grasp of intellect that could cope with the loftiest abstractions of philosophy, and a playfulness that could condescend to sport with a child. Yet whilst it is thus true that the possessor of a great mind may be

capable of sympathizing with, of entering kindly into the views and feelings, the joys and sorrows of inferior minds, it must at the same time be admitted that there is ever a range of thought and feeling into which they cannot enter with him. They may accompany him, so to speak, a certain height up the mountain, but there is a point at which their feebler powers become exhausted, and if he ascend beyond that, his path must be a solitary one.

What is thus true of all great minds must have been, beyond all others, characteristic of the mind of Him who, with all his real and very humanity, could "think it no robbery to be equal with God." Jesus was indeed a lonely being in the world. With all the exquisite tenderness of his human sympathies, — touched with the feeling of our every sinless infirmity, — with a heart that could feel for a peasant's sorrow, and an eye that could beam with tenderness on an infant's face, — he was yet one who, wherever he went, and by whomsoever surrounded, was, in the secrecy of his inner being, profoundly *alone*. You who are parents have, I dare say, often felt struck by the reflection, what a world of thoughts, and cares, and anxieties are constantly present to *your* minds into which your children cannot enter. You may be continually amongst them, holding familiar intercourse with them, condescending to all their childish thoughts and feelings, entering into all their childish ways, — yet every day there are a thousand things passing through your mind, with respect, for instance, to your business or profession, your schemes and projects, your troubles, fears, hopes and ambitions in life, your social connections, the incidents and events that are going on in the world around you, — there are a thousand reflections and feelings on such matters passing daily through your mind, of which your children know nothing. You never dream of talking to them on such subjects, and they could not understand or sympathize with you if you did. There is a little world in which the play of their passions is strong and vivid, but beyond that their sympathies entirely fail. And perhaps there is no spectacle so exquisitely touching as that which one sometimes witnesses in a house of mourning — the elder members of the family bowed down to the dust by some heavy sorrow, whilst the little children sport around in unconscious playfulness.

The bearing of this illustration is obvious. What children are to the mature-minded man, the rest of mankind were to Jesus.

The preacher goes on to say that he intends to follow out the thought of Christ's solitariness with particular reference to his *sorrows*. And he does so with eloquence

so impressive that we regret we can find room for no further specimens of it.

We have not space to do more than mention the subjects of the remaining sermons which make up the volume. The sermon which follows that on *The Solitariness of Christ's Sufferings*, is a sort of companion piece, on the text "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ." (1 Peter iv. 13.) There is a discourse on *Spiritual Rest* which we think less happy; a very able one on the text, "I wish that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth," (3 John 2); another admirable sermon on "All things are yours," which Mr. Caird preached before the Queen last autumn. There is a temperate and judicious sermon on *The Simplicity of Christian Ritual*, in which the author cautions us against attaching too much consequence to such things as church architecture and stately church services. At the same time Mr. Caird describes these perilous delights with such manifest gusto, that it is quite obvious he would have no serious objections to the cathedral worship and to York Minster. It is indeed quite true that —

There is a semi-sensuous delight in religious worship imposingly conducted, which may be felt by the least conscientious even more than by the sincerely devout. The soul that is devoid of true reverence towards God may be rapt into a spurious elation while in rich and solemn tones the loud-voiced organ peals forth his praise. The heart that never felt one throb of love to Christ may thrill with an ecstasy of sentimental tenderness while soft voices, now blending, now dividing, in combined or responsive strains, celebrate the glories of redeeming love. And not seldom the most sensual and profligate of men have owned to that strange, undefined, yet delicious feeling of awe and elevation that steals over the spirit in some fair adorned temple on which all the resources of art have been lavished, where soft light floods the air and mystic shadows play over pillar and arch and vaulted roof, and the hushed and solemn stillness is broken only by the voice of prayer or praise.

All quite true ; but though no doubt such feeling as Mr. Caird describes is not religion, it may prepare the way for receiving impressions which are properly religious. Nor can we evade the grand principle, that we ought to consecrate to the Almighty our very best in architecture and in melody as in everything else, by the reflection that such things, like all others in this world, may be abused. And, by the way, Mr. Caird appears to have forgotten to tell his hearers that if worshippers in the south may mistake their æsthetic enjoyment of beautiful church-worship for true devotion, there is at least as much risk that worshippers farther north may confuse their enjoyment of the intellectual treat of listening to impassioned and brilliant pulpit-oratory with a real reception of the great truths which are in such oratory set forth. If Anglicans must smash their stained-glass, board over their vaulted roofs, and turn off their cathedral choristers, then ought Mr. Caird to cut out his imagery, to destroy the rhythm of the last sentences of his paragraphs, and to cultivate a chronic sore-throat. If it be right for a clergyman to labor day and night to make his sermon beautiful, why not his church as well ? And if the church must be only moderately beautiful, then the preaching must not be obtrusively so. Does Mr. Caird mean to insinuate a covert assurance, that however pleasing and admirable his discourses may be, he could, were it not for fear of exciting æsthetic emotion, make them a great deal better ?

The last sermon in the volume is on *The Comparative Influence of Character and Doctrine*. The text is "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." (1 Tim. iv. 16.) And Mr. Caird, not perhaps with very critical accuracy, maintains that St. Paul, in writing that text, placed the

two matters to be attended to in the order of their importance: thus signifying that the life was of more moment than the instruction; that it was the preacher's duty to take heed, first to himself, and secondly to his doctrine. Whether the general principle be implied in the text or not, there is no doubt it is a sound one; and the sermon enforces the old story, that example is better than precept, with extraordinary ability and eloquence.

Thus have we endeavored, as regards these discourses of Mr. Caird, to do what we used to do every Sunday evening when we were children at home: to wit, to "give an account of the sermons." It was rather wearisome work then, we remember; we trust our readers have not found it so now. Let us add, that fine as are these published sermons, we are not sure that they are Mr. Caird's best. Authors are proverbially bad judges of their own productions, and preachers are no exceptions to the rule. And we have heard from some of the author's warm admirers fond recollections of sermons on the texts, *Every man shall bear his own burden, Surely I come quickly, There shall be no more pain, All things are become new, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them,* — which are said to contain passages which for telling effect upon a congregation are not equalled by anything in the printed volume. Perhaps the great preacher thought it as well not to give his followers the opportunity of examining the red-hot shot after it had grown cold.

An amusing proof of Mr. Caird's great popularity is afforded by the number of young preachers who try to imitate him. And indeed it cannot be denied that several have succeeded in brushing their hair very like him. Others can walk up the pulpit-stair very much as Mr

#### 364 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

Caird does. Several have a happy knack of wiping their face like him at the close of each "head," and more have successfully imitated some tones of his voice, and the manner in which he pronounces certain words which he pronounces ill. The general impression left on the mind by any imitator of Mr. Caird, is that of a very fat goose attempting to fly like an eagle. It may be supposed that only the weakest of the aspirants to the clerical office will join the class of direct imitators. But Mr. Caird's success has had a powerful influence upon young men of a higher stamp, in leading them to cultivate a highly animated and impassioned kind of pulpit oratory. The calm unexciting elegance of a former age is at a discount in the North. Dr. Blair would preach to empty benches now. And it must be admitted that the standard of Scotch preaching is at this time a very high one. The sermon is so completely the great thing in the Scotch service, that extraordinary labor is often spent upon it. It would be easy to mention the names of a score of preachers who, if they were to sink as far as the Surrey Music Hall, could, without claptrap or buffoonery, completely eclipse Mr. Spurgeon in the arts of popular oratory. Poor as is the worldly remuneration of the Scotch clergy, it is wonderful how the most able and accomplished students in the Universities of Scotland are found to devote themselves to that ill-paid ministry. A, who was first all through the classes, goes into the church, fills several important charges with great ability, and dies at the age of fifty, worn down by labor and excitement, an Edinburgh minister with six hundred a year. B, whom he easily beat in every competition, goes to the Scotch bar, does pretty fairly, is made (by the Whigs) a judge, draws his three or four thousand *per annum*, and by

judiciously husbanding his bodily and mental energies, is able to adorn that high station to the age of eighty-six. In six months after A dies, the crowds he thrilled by his eloquence have entirely forgotten him. Yet possibly the work he did is remembered somewhere: and crowds of clever young lads in the academic shades of Edinburgh and Glasgow aim rather to be A than B.

A great deal has of late been said and written about preaching. It seems to be agreed on all hands that it will no longer do to have sermons such that people cannot listen to them. Assuming sound instruction as present in all sermons, the highest of all remaining qualities of the sermon is *interest*. Whatever literary characteristics tend to make a sermon *interesting*, are good; and the very highest, if they make it uninteresting, are bad. Yet how great a proportion of the sermons one hears, — however deserving in other respects, — are utterly devoid of the grand quality, interest. The sermons are able, well-thought, and well-written compositions, but they are very *dry*. Yet Sydney Smith's saying of literature in general holds especially good of pulpit literature, that every style is good, *except the tiresome*. We believe that church is the only place where people do not listen to what is said to them. "I like so much," said the laboring man in Southey's *Doctor*, "to go to church on Sunday: when the sermon begins I lean back in the corner, and lay up my legs, and *think of nothing*." We sympathize with that poor man. It is the clergyman's business to make his sermon such that while it is going on no one shall be able to "think of nothing."

There are two things which from our earliest youth have in our mind stood out together as equally desirable,

and in the nature of things equally impossible. The one is, to bring matters to such a point that it shall be possible to get out of our snug warm bed on a cold winter morning without a very great effort; the other is, that the service of the Church should be made such that it shall not be tiresome to be present at it. We believe that in the case of men in general the most insufferably tedious and wearisome hours they have ever spent, have been many of those which they have spent at church.

As to the prayers of the Anglican ritual, no doubt they are very beautiful, though with a calm scholarly beauty which makes no impression upon children or uneducated people. There are likewise by far too many of them; and we are persuaded that if the truth were told, most of our readers have experienced that sense of relief we used to feel in our youth, when our worthy pastor and master of those days reached that prayer of St. Chrysostom which signified that the long service was nearly over. We are not going to say anything of the devotional part of the Church service; because we fear that no beauty and no brevity will ever make that portion of it interesting except to the sincerely devout; and there we must leave the matter. But there is another part of the usual public worship which we really think need not be so horribly tedious as it is in most cases, — we mean the sermon. When Edward Irving published a volume of discourses, instead of designating them by the usual name of sermons, he preferred to describe them on his title-page as *Orations*; mentioning as his reason the well-ascertained fact, that there is something in the very name of *sermon* that makes people grow sleepy, and that suggests dulness, yawning, and tediousness to the last degree.

We quite believe that in the nature of things it is

properly impossible to render serious instruction as interesting as light amusement. Disguise it as we can, work will never be made so attractive as play. Boys are instantly aware when it is intended to benefit them under the pretext of amusing them ; and the revulsion is instant and complete. When Dr. Chalmers said that the thing which above all others has tended to make *Robinson Crusoe* such a favorite book with boys is, that no book combines to such a degree instruction with amusement, he made a statement just as absurd and false as if he had said that black was white. But while we admit all this, we believe that the pill may be gilded so far, and that sermons need not be nauseous as medicines are, and never to be listened to but by a conscious effort and as an irksome task.

He would be a benefactor of his race who should succeed in laying down a code of rules, by obeying which men of ordinary ability might succeed in preparing and preaching sermons, which should be interesting to an ordinary congregation, and at the same time characterized by good sense and good taste. These two ends have hardly ever been attained together. There are numbers of sensible and correct preachers, whom no one can listen to for ten minutes without becoming aware of that peculiar pricking of the veins, and disposition to fidget uneasily, which are associated with the last degree of weariness. There is really such a thing as *acute* tediousness. And of the much smaller number of pulpit orators who succeed systematically in keeping the attention of their congregations thoroughly alive from the beginning to the end of their discourses, most, if not all, deal to a great degree in what may be termed claptrap. Their sermons are often outrageously revolting to men

### 368 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

of refined taste, or filled with views which are extravagant and absurd.

It is a great end to get an entire congregation to listen with interested attention from first to last of a sermon; but this end may be attained at too considerable an expense. One can easily think of various expedients that would for a time attract a crowd, and get it to gaze stupidly for an hour. A person from America preached some time since in some dissenting meeting-house in this country, arrayed in skins and feathers as an Indian chief. He was described as a war-chief of the Somethingoroth-erawaws, and vast crowds, with visions of scalping-knives and wampum-belts, came to hear him, till it was understood that he was only a porter at a steamboat wharf on the Mississippi, and that his strange attire would have excited much more surprise in his native place than it did at Manchester. A small boy of nine or ten years old was advertised to preach in a large building in Glasgow; and to the disgrace of that town some three or four thousand people crowded to hear him on more occasions than one. An individual calling himself the Angel Gabriel, held large assemblages of the Modern Athenians in breathless attention by preaching with a trumpet in his hand, which he sounded at the end of each paragraph of his sermon. The usual tedium of a church would be dissipated were the officiating clergyman to turn a somersault at intervals. Any wretched mountebank may keep attention alive by shrieks and yells, rushings about his platform, imitations of the Yankee snuffle or the gibberish of Cockayne, — in short, by degrading the pulpit beneath the level of the stage of a minor theatre. But the question is, how may a man, without sinking the clergyman, the scholar, and the gentleman, — without becoming a

buffoon or a melodramatic actor, — without eccentricity in the choice of texts and topics, in illustration or gesture, — make a sermon as interesting and attractive as in the nature of things religious instruction can be made.

There is one obvious rule which is very generally violated : a preacher should take some pains to make his meaning intelligible. Many a clergyman who would not think of giving orders to his man-servant in terms which that person could not by possibility understand, is yet accustomed every Sunday to address a rustic congregation in discourses which would be just as intelligible *to it* if they were preached in Hebrew. Let a preacher be direct and straightforward : let him avoid roundabout sentences ; they are much more puzzling to the dull brain of a country bumpkin than are mere big words : let him put his meaning sharply and clearly. We believe that this is a great secret of interest. We might suggest the abundant use of illustration *which really illustrates* the subject ; but every preacher has not the faculty which enables him to use this arm. Comparisons drawn from daily life are a tower of force. And we strongly recommend to all young clergymen whose pulpit manner is not yet hopelessly formed, the reading of a good deal of light literature. They should read *that* to see what kind of matter interests the majority of minds. Most preachers have a thoroughly mistaken notion on that point. A man who has brought himself to feel a deep interest in dry tomes of old Theology, or even in the more flimsy popular theological literature of the day, forgets that the human race in general takes no interest in such things ; and fancies that when producing thought which he knows or thinks would interest *himself*, he is all right. He is far mistaken ! Who reads Theol-

370 CONCERNING A GREAT SCOTCH PREACHER.

ogy by choice? Ask the publisher of ordinary sermons. Let the preacher, then, make himself familiar with the kind of thought and style which people read because attracted and interested by it. We do not say that he should take that for his model, or imitate it in any way. But let him see there what sort of *pabulum* suits the common appetite; and let him aim at making his sermons if possible as easy and pleasant to be listened to as *that* is to be read. We believe that the main cause why sermons are so dull is that their writers do not seriously set it as a worthy aim to make them interesting. Most preachers—if we except those whose end is simply to cover their paper with the least possible trouble—aim at completeness of treatment, at elegance of style, at scholarly tone and finish,—all ends quite apart from the great end of *interest*. If interest were systematically made the great object of endeavor; if clergymen remembered that unless they get their congregation to listen to them, they might as well not preach at all,—we are convinced, with average talent and average industry on the preacher's part, there would be fewer dry sermons and fewer sleepers in church.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### OULITA THE SERF.<sup>1</sup>

**T**HIS volume has no preface, and no notes save two or three of a line's length each. Its title-page bears nothing beyond the words, *Oulita the Serf; a Tragedy*. But the advertisements which foretold its publication, added a fact which made us open the book with a very different feeling from that with which we should have taken up an ordinary anonymous play, — a fact which at once excited high expectations, — and which, we doubt not, has already introduced *Oulita* to a wide circle of readers, each prepared to gauge its merits by a very severe test and a very high standard. The forthcoming volume was announced as *Oulita the Serf; a Tragedy: by the Author of "Friends in Council."*

The disguise of the author of that work is becoming ragged. We have found, in more than one library, where a special glory of binding was bestowed upon the book and its charming sequel, that though the title-page bore no name, the volumes were marked with a name which is well and honorably known. And indeed there are few books which are so calculated as *Friends in Council* to make the reader wish to know who is their author:

<sup>1</sup> *Oulita the Serf. A Tragedy*. London: John W. Parker and Son. 1858.

and surely the language has none which affords its writer less reason for seeking any disguise. Yet it is not for us to add the author's name to a title-page which the author has chosen to send nameless into the world: though we may be permitted to say, that in common with an increasing host of readers, we cannot think of him as other than a kindly and sympathetic friend.

Accordingly, we expected a great deal from this new work. We were not entirely taken by surprise, indeed, when we saw it announced; for Ellesmere, in *Friends in Council*, makes several quotations from the works of "a certain obscure dramatist," which are likely to set the thoughtful reader inquiring. And whoever shall carefully collate the advertisements of the late Mr. Pickering's publications, will discover that the author of *Oulita* published fifteen years ago a historical drama, entitled *King Henry the Second*; and a tragedy entitled *Catherine Douglas*, whose heroine is the strong-hearted Scottish maiden who thrust her arm into the staple of a door from which the bolt had been removed, in the desperate hope of thus retarding for a moment the entrance of the conspirators who murdered James the First. But these plays are comparatively unknown; and probably very many readers who have been delighted by that graceful, unaffected prose, were quite unaware that its writer was endowed with the faculty of verse. We could not fail, indeed, to discern in his prose works the wide, genial sympathy, the deep thoughtfulness, the delicate sensitiveness, of the true poet. And his talent, we could also discover from these, is essentially dramatic. The characters in *Friends in Council* have each their marked individuality; while yet that individuality is maintained and brought out, not by coarse caricature, but by those

delicate and natural touches which make us feel that we are conversing with real human beings, and not with mere names in a book. It is an extremely easy thing to make us recognize a character when he reappears upon the stage, by making him perpetually repeat some silly and vulgar phrase. Smith is the man who never enters without roaring "It's all serene:" Jones is the individual who always says, "Not to put too fine a point upon it." Nor is it difficult for an author to *tell us* that his hero is a great man, a philanthropist, a thinker, an actor: it is quite another matter to make him speak and act so that we shall find *that* out for ourselves. Most characters in modern works need to be labelled; — like the sign-painter's lion, which no one would have guessed was a lion but for the words *This is a lion*, written beneath it.

Let us say at once, that this tragedy has surpassed our expectation. It is a noble and beautiful work. It is strongly marked with the same characteristics which distinguish its author's former writings. Its power and excellence are mainly in thoughtfulness, pathos, humor. There is a certain subtlety of thought, — a capacity gradually to surround the reader with an entire world and a complete life: we feel how heartily the writer has thrown himself into the state of things he describes, half believing the tale he tells, and using gently and tenderly the characters he draws. We have a most interesting story: we see before us beings of actual flesh and blood. We do not know whether the gentle, yet resolute Oulita, — the Princess Marie, that spoiled child of fortune, now all wild ferocity, and now all soft relenting, — the Count von Straubenheim, that creature of passion so deep yet so slow, so calm upon the surface, yet so un-

petuous in its under-currents, — ever lived save in the fancy of the poet: but to us they are a reality, — far more a reality than half the men who have lived and died in fact, but who live on the page of history the mere bloodless life of a word and an abstraction. We find in this tragedy the sharp knowledge of life and human nature for which we were prepared: a certain tinge of sadness and resignation which did not surprise us: a kindly yet sorrowful feeling towards the very worst, which we are persuaded comes with the longer and fuller experience of the strange mixture of the lovable and the hateful which is woven into the constitution of the race. Here and there, we find the calm, self-possessed order of thought with which we have elsewhere grown familiar, gradually rise into eloquent energy, and vigor of expression which startles. But the hero is not one who raves and stamps. And indeed the fastidious taste of the writer, shrinking instinctively from the least trace of coarseness or extravagance, has perhaps resulted in a little want of the terrible passion of tragedy: for we can well believe that many an expression, and many a sentiment, which, heard just for once from eloquent lips, would thrill even the most refined, would be struck out by the remorseless pen, or at least toned down, when calmly, critically, and repeatedly read over by such an author as ours, when the fever of creative inspiration was past. We remark, as a characteristic of the plot, and a circumstance vitally affecting the order of its interest, that the catastrophe is involved in the characters of the actors. It is not by the arbitrary appointment of the author, that things run in the course they do. There is something of the old Greek sense of the inevitable. We feel from the beginning that the end is fixed as fate. Like Frankenstein, the poet has bodied

out beings whom he has not at his command : and not without essentially changing their natures, could he materially modify what they say and do, or materially alter the path along which they advance to the precipice in the distance. Given such beings, placed in Russian life and under Russian government : and not without a jarring sacrifice of truthfulness could the story advance or end otherwise than as it does.

The language of the tragedy is such as might have been expected from its author. There is not a phrase, not a word from first to last, to which the most fastidious taste could take exception. So much might be anticipated by readers familiar with the author's prose style : but we felt something of curiosity as to how it might adapt itself to the altered conditions of verse. Even those readers who were not aware that the author of *Friends in Council* had ever before published poetry, might well judge that surely these lines, so easy, so flowing, so little labored, so varied in their rhythm, so uncramped by metrical requirements, are not the production of an unpractised hand. Parts of the dialogue are in prose ; the larger portion is in blank verse ; and some graceful lyrics occur here and there. A peculiarity of the author's blank verse is, that the lines frequently end in three short syllables. Our readers are of course aware that both in rhymed and blank verse, double endings of lines are very common : in dramatic blank verse, indeed, we find line after line exhibiting this formation :<sup>1</sup> but we are not aware that any author has

<sup>1</sup> To be, or not to be, that is the *question* :  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to *suffer*  
The slings and arrows of outrageous *fortune*,  
Or to take arms against a sea of *troubles*, &c.

employed the triple ending to the same degree, or indeed has employed it at all except on very rare occasions. In the first page, we find it said that the end of government should be, not to govern overmuch, but

To make men do with the least show of *governing*.

Other examples are,

In foreign Courts 'tis everything, this *precedence*.  
From trappings overgreat for poor *humanity*.  
E'en to yourself must be unknown your *benefits*.  
Alone and undisturbed, upon her *loveliness*.

And there is one instance of an ending in four short syllables:—

In evidence against us, marking *preparation*.

We have been interested by finding here and there, throughout the tragedy, several thoughts upon matters more or less important, with which we had become acquainted in the writer's former works. It is plain that the writer thinks the discomfort arising from fashions of dress a not insignificant item in the tale of human suffering: he would agree with Teufelsdröckh himself as to the undeserved neglect in which men have held the "philosophy of clothes." We find the men-servants at a Boyard Prince's chateau busily engaged in trying on their new liveries, which have been prepared for a grand occasion. The Prince enters, and finds but little progress made. He rates his domestics for their slowness; whereupon the "Small Wise Man," a dwarf attached to his establishment, thus excuses his fellows:—

Oh! the happy peasants are so uncomfortable, my little father, in their happy new clothes, that they put off the squeezing themselves into them to the last moment. It's a nice thing a new shoe, now; and not so very unlike a marriage, my little mother.

The author had thought upon this subject before : —

My own private opinion is, that the discomfort caused by injudicious dress, worn entirely in deference to the most foolish of mankind, would outweigh many an evil that sounds very big. Tested by these perfect returns, which I imagine might be made by the angelic world, if they regard human affairs, perhaps our every-day shaving, severe shirt-collars, and other ridiculous garments, are equivalent to a great European war once in seven years; and we should find that women's stays did as much harm, i. e. caused as much suffering, as an occasional pestilence, — say, for instance, the cholera.<sup>1</sup>

In graver mood, we find something of the philosophy of worldly progress and quietude, in words which suggest (how truly) that the man who would *get on* in life had better not think to carve out a way for himself, but should rather keep to the track which many other feet have beaten into smoothness and firmness. The hero of the tragedy says, —

To preserve one's quietude,  
It needs that one should travel in the ruts  
That form the ordinary road, for else  
The wheels stick fast.

The analogy is so apt and true, that it had previously suggested itself : —

Get, if you can, into one or other of the main grooves of human affairs. It is all the difference of going by railway, and walking over a ploughed field, whether you adopt common courses, or set one up for yourself. You will see very inferior persons highly placed in the army, in the church, in office, at the bar. They have somehow got upon the line, and have moved on well with very little original motive power of their own.<sup>2</sup>

We find that the author, very naturally, makes his hero express tastes which he himself feels strongly. One of

<sup>1</sup> *Companions of my Solitude*. Chap. III. And see the same subject discussed in the essay on *Conformity*, in Chap. II. of *Friends in Council*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Chap. IV.

these tastes, which appears repeatedly in his former writings, is for woodland scenery. "There is scarcely anything in nature," he says, "to be compared with a pine-wood." Once, in approaching a certain continental city, the author passed through what the guide-books described as a most insipid country. But the guide-books did not know what were his personal likings; leaving his carriage at the little post-house, he walked on, promising to be in the way when it should overtake him.

The road led through a wood, chiefly of pines, varied, however, occasionally by other trees. Into this wood I strayed. There was that almost indescribably soothing noise (the Romans would have used the word *susurrus*), the aggregate of many gentle movements of gentle creatures. The birds hopped but a few paces off as I approached them: the brilliant butterflies wavered hither and thither before me: there was a soft breeze that day, and the tops of the tall trees swayed to and fro politely to each other. I found many delightful resting-places. It was not all dense wood; but here and there were glades (such open spots I mean as would be cut through by the sword for an army to pass); and here and there stood a clump of trees of different heights and foliage, as beautifully arranged as if some triumph of the art of landscape had been intended, though it was only Nature's way of healing up the gaps in the forest. For her healing is a new beauty.<sup>1</sup>

Thus speaks the author in his own person: and his hero passing alone through a wood, speaks as follows: —

I ever loved a wood; and here I've mused,  
Pressing with lightest footfall the crisp leaves,  
In boyhood's days, when life seemed infinite,  
And every fitful sound a song of joy.  
Great is the sea, but tedious; rich the sun,  
But one gets tired of him, too; joyous the wind,  
But boisterous and intrusive; — while, the wood  
Divides the sun, and air, and sky; and, like  
A perfect woman, naught too much revealed,  
Nor aught too much concealing.

<sup>1</sup> *Companions of my Solitude.* Chap. VI.

We shall be content to quote one other instance of parallelism, in the notice given to a matter which every one who lives in a wooded district must often have remarked in his woodland wanderings. The hero of the tragedy is asked to tell of what he has been thinking, as he has been traversing the wood which he enjoys so much: here is his reply:—

Mere melancholy thoughts, fit for a servitor:  
How this tree here hemmed in its puny neighbor,  
Drinking the air and light from it; how that,  
The vagrant branches into shapes grotesque  
Constrained, insisted yet on being beautiful,  
And like a homely girl with one charm only,  
Took care to make that charm discernible.

In saying this, the hero of the play is repeating what had before been said by its author. And it appears to us an indication of the lifelike reality with which the author depicted to himself the man whom he drew as he paced along, looking at the gray stems and the long grass below, and the green leaves and blue glimpses of sky above:—

Yes, Ellesmere, my love for woods is unabated. There is so much largeness, life, and variety in them. Even the way in which the trees interfere with one another, the growth which is hindered, as well as that which is furthered, appears to me most suggestive of human life; and I see around me things that remind me of governments, churches, sects, and colonies.

We should not be doing justice to *Oulita*, if we failed to remark, as something singular in these days, that it is a purely and perfectly original work. Its author has constructed his own plot, and imagined his own characters. It is very well for writers who have no higher aim than to supply the immediate exigencies of the stage, to quarry in the abundant mine of French invention; and to copy, borrow, or *adapt*, as the phrase now runs. But

we should have been greatly surprised had the author of *Friends in Council* resorted to that cheap method of producing a dramatic work. It cannot be denied that several dramatic writers of the day have shown considerable tact in toning French characters and modifying French plots, till they should hit the English taste, and not sound absurdly upon English ground. But to do *that* is a *knack*, a sort of intellectual sleight of hand : it argues no invention, no dramatic genius : it comes rather of much practical acquaintance with the tricks and effects of the theatre. The author of this play has essayed a higher flight. He has resolved to give the English stage a really original work : and holding firmly, as we know from his former writings, that some kind of amusement is a pure necessary of life, and that there is in human nature an instinctive leaning to the dramatic as a source of amusement, he has sought to show, by example, that without becoming namby-pamby, — without making the well-intentioned degenerate into the twaddling, — and without making the great school-boys of mankind scent the birch-rod and the imposition under the disguise of cricket-bats and strawberry tarts, — it is possible to make a play such as that in amusing it shall also instruct, refine, and elevate. It is not by coarsely tacking on a moral to a tragedy that you will enforce any moral teaching. You must so wrap up the improving and instructive element in the interesting and attractive, that the mass of readers or listeners shall never know when they have overstepped the usually well-marked limit that parts work and play. And we think that the author of *Oulita* has succeeded in this. A refreshing and elevating influence sinks into the mind, like a shower upon a newly-mown lawn, as we read his pages. You feel, but cannot

define it. But many worthy people would cram improvement, a thick porridge, down their humbler neighbors' throats, — like Mrs. Squeers's treacle and sulphur.

As the reader would expect from the title of the book, the scene of the tragedy is in Russia. Its time is the beginning of the present century. And the author has, in virtue of his hearty sympathy with humanity under all conditions, thrown himself completely into Russian life, and brought his readers into an entire world of scenes, things, and men and women. Yet, though the scene be in Russia, and though we know from his other works how much the author hates slavery, we find proof of the calm balance of his mind in the fashion in which he represents serfdom. His honesty will not permit him to coarsely daub his picture for the sake of popular effect, or to represent the "peculiar institution" as more glaringly bad than he has ground for believing it practically is, in order to render it more abhorrent to our feeling. Nor do we find any violent exhibition of despotic sway. We do not believe that the author would sympathize in the least with the childish cry for Imperialism which lately arose in this country. We trust the nation has passed through that crisis, like a child through the cow-pox, and that we are fairly done with it. Still, in the play, the Emperor of Russia is represented in a very favorable light, as kind-hearted, accessible, willing to listen to reason, and even to accusation of himself; and though autocratic, yet enchaind by an overmastering and tyrannic sense of what is right and just, which drags him against his dearest wishes. We have said that there is no putting of serfdom in its coarser and more repellent features. *Oulita, the Serf*, is the pride and pet of the old Prince to whom she belongs; and the chosen companion and friend of

the Princess his daughter. No cruelties are described as actually inflicted upon any serf in the course of the action of the drama:— we can imagine that the sensitive nature of the author would shrink from any such description: yet we feel keenly the hard iron links which are present beneath the soft velvet surface. We never entirely forget the difference that parts the serf, however indulged, from the freeman, however degraded. The gentle confidante is liable to be handed over, at the capricious word of her spoiled-child mistress, to the executioner's lash. And the naturally noble heart of the Princess is well-nigh ruined by the long possession of unlimited power. We are not sure but that to the thoughtful reader, serfdom is made as incurably bad in this volume, as it could have been in the picture of a *Legree*. The way to make us feel that a thing is hopelessly bad, is to show us that it is bad at its very best. If it be a sad thing to be in bondage to a mild, silly old gentleman who would not hurt a fly, and to a warm-hearted girl who kisses more than she scolds,— what must it be when the whip is in the hand of a coarse, brutal, swearing, drunken reprobate!

The first scene of the tragedy shows us Baron Grübner, the Russian Minister of Police, seated at his desk in his bureau at St. Petersburg. He is inveighing against the Count Von Straubenheim, who is on terms of intimate friendship with the Emperor, and who has been instilling into the autocrat's mind certain political doctrines of much too advanced a character for Grübner's taste. Grübner is the type of the old Continental politician: the Count belongs to the school of progress; and Grübner, fearing lest the Count's influence with the Emperor should bring to an end the reign of police ad-

ministration, has organized a system of *espionage*, in the hope of detecting the Count in some proceeding which may lead to his downfall. We feel, at once, that the ground is mined beneath our feet, and that we are in a region over which broods the unseen but all-seeing presence of a secret police. We never escape the feeling on to the end of the play. A spy enters, and informs Grübner that the Emperor again receives the obnoxious Count that evening. The vulgar spy has his information from a certain baroness, a spy of a higher class. The spy leaves, and Grübner thus goes on:—

Far into

The distant future this wise man looked forward,  
And saw a time, he told the Emperor,  
When half the world would not employ itself  
In worrying the other half. Great sage!  
He meant that for a sneer at the Police;  
And when good honest men would not sit down  
At meat with titled spies — that means the Baroness;  
Or with the men who pay them — that means me.

Another spy enters, 'one Ermolai, whom Grübner has got into the Count's employ as his secretary, to maintain a constant watch over his private doings. Ermolai complains that his post is a sinecure. There is nothing to report. The Count spends all his time in reading. He reads theology. *That*, Grübner thinks, is an important point. If the Count succeeds in indoctrinating the Emperor with his theories, down goes Grübner, and with him (of course he is a most disinterested man) Russia. The Count, Grübner says, is to be married: so the Emperor and he have resolved: then he is to go as ambassador to England, where he will probably make some mistake that will ruin him, or at least where he will be beyond the Emperor's reach. Grübner dismisses Ermolai, ordering

him to maintain a most minute watch, and chuckles at his own skill in getting the Count to take a police tool for his secretary.

The second scene carries us to the Count von Straubenheim's library. He is among his favorite books. He lays down his volume, and muses as follows: —

One reads, and reads, and reads: one seldom gets  
Right into the heart of things — there's so much floss  
And fluff; and few can tell what they do know.  
Long histories: weary biographies:  
They only teach us what I partly guessed  
Before — that men were most times miserable,  
And simple thoroughly, wasting their souls  
In plaguing other men, and seldom living  
What I call life — an ugly dream it is;  
And yet, with all my faculty for sarcasm,  
I must confess that men, the worst of men,  
This scoundrel horde of conquerors, for instance,  
Have something very lovable about them.  
The deeper that one goes, the more one's pity  
Falls like a gentle snow upon the plain  
Flooded with blood, and strewn with cruel carnage  
Leaving the outlines beautiful, and just  
Concealing what 'twere better never had  
Been done — concealing only, not erasing:  
'Tis a mixed brood.

We speedily find that the recluse student is not so simple after all. He knows all about Ermolai being a spy upon him. He sends for Ermolai: says he is about to marry the beautiful daughter of Prince Lanskof. Ermolai discourages the marriage, and says, —

I've heard a saying  
Of some sagacious world-versed man, — that marriage  
Must be pronounced a thing so hazardous,  
The odds so much against one, that it were  
As if a man should dip his hand within  
A bag of snakes, where one eel lies concealed;  
And mostly he draws back his injured hand  
Without the innocent eel.

The Count is anxious to repudiate any notion save of a prosaic marriage of convenience; but at the same time he beautifully depicts what he says he never had felt: —

I have a distant notion of what love  
Might be. I know the dreams about the thing.  
That there is one whose every look and word  
Is fascination, graceful as the clouds,  
Bright as the morn, and tender as the eve, —  
Whose lightest gesture, as she moves across  
The room, seems like a well-known melody, —  
And whom you need not talk to much, for that's  
The touchstone, — to whom you've nothing to explain,  
Because she always thinks too well of you.

In answer to the Count's question where he shall find such a paragon, the Secretary mentions the name of the singing-girl at Moscow, Oulita. The Count remembers her well. But he speedily passes to talk of the embassy to England; and then bids Ermolai prepare a sumptuous retinue for his visit to the chateau of Prince Lanskof, the father of his intended bride. Ermolai goes: and then we learn from a speech of the Count's that he is quite aware that the marriage and embassy are a design of Grübner's to compass his ruin. But he will fight Grübner with his own weapons. He will pluck from his bosom the remembrance of Oulita, wed the Princess, come back with credit from his embassy, and do good to his country. If he shall succeed, well. And if not, life is already as dull as it well can be.

We next find ourselves in the hall of Prince Lanskof's chateau. The servants are trying on their new liveries: the dancing-girls are practising their steps. The "Small Wise Man," a dwarf belonging to the Prince, a jester of more than usual jest, and deeper than ordinary wisdom,

makes his first appearance. All is bustle : the Count is to arrive in three hours. Oulita appears along with the Princess, the latter promising her that she shall not have to join in the dances. The Prince drills his domestics in a manner that reminds us of Mr. Hardcastle in *She Stoops to Conquer*. He is a fussy, silly old gentleman, proud of his daughter, and picturing the grand figure she is to make at the English Court as the Russian ambassador.

Meanwhile Oulita has strayed into a wood near the chateau ; and there the Count, who has chosen to dismiss his retinue and walk through the wood alone, hears her well-remembered voice as she sings. The Count accosts her with some light badinage, of which Oulita has the best. Then they talk more gravely. Mitchka, the executioner at the chateau, watches them from behind a tree. Oulita recognizes in the Count the man who followed her about at Moscow. He tells her that he came in the Count's train.

Then we are carried to the hall at the chateau, where the Small Wise Man is addressing the servants. He speaks from a barrel, on which he is seated : —

The illustrious Count Von Straubenheim, who, with our permission, is about to marry into our family, intends to give to every member of the household — something which shall be good for him : great guerdon, liberal largesse. For you Melchior, Nicholas, and Petrovitch (pointing out three fat men), he intends to ask for a week's fast, and three weeks' out-of-door's work in the woods. For you, Theodore, a sound scourging at the hands of gentle Mitchka, that you may know how to manage your horses better, and what are the feelings of an animal when it is whipped. For you, Dimitri, our illustrious son-in-law has thought deeply, and intends to ask the Prince to have your wife brought home from his other estate, because you always lived so happily together.

No wonder that the Small Wise Man held his own in

that household. We doubt not the servants feared his tongue nearly as much as Mitchka's scourge.

The Prince, Princess, and their attendants enter ; as do the Count, Ermolai, and their people. The Small Wise Man catechizes the Count in a jocular manner as to his qualifications for marrying and becoming ambassador ; and when the Count and Prince go together to the banquet, he muses in a very different strain. He is pleased with the Count's appearance : —

A noble presence and a thoughtful eye,  
But sad.

And Oulita entering, he speaks to her wisely and kindly, in a fashion which reveals strongly to us the grand want which every thoughtful serf must never cease to feel. "Study to get free, girl," he says ; "free, free, free, free !" We now overhear a conversation between the executioner Mitchka, and Vasili Androvitch, Prince Lanskof's steward ; from which we find that the steward has promised to pay Mitchka three thousand roubles if he can catch Oulita in any fault which may bring her under his lash. The steward's hope is, that in such a case he may compel Oulita to become his wife, as the reward of his procuring her pardon. Vasili is quite aware that Oulita hates him ; but that does not matter, in his estimation. In the crowd of dancers in the hall, the Count again meets Oulita : a confidence has grown up fast between them, and she tells her longing to be free. The Count declares that she shall be, and gives Oulita his ring as a pledge. He has mingled unnoted with the throng in the hall, and Oulita is still unaware who he is. But she tells as she feels entranced and bewildered.

Meanwhile the Count seeks Ermolai, and has an ex-

planation with him. Ermolai is startled to find that the Count has been quite aware that he was a spy of Grüber's, and is penetrated with remorse at the thought that, while aware of all this, the Count saved him from drowning in the Neva. He always loved the Count; and from this time forward he is his faithful ally and friend. The Count tells him he loves Oulita, and is determined to make her free. He has thought of several plans. An adroit serf, Stépan, disguised as a merchant, will come to buy her. That scheme failing, the Count's servants are to create some great alarm, and bear her off in the tumult. Meanwhile there is to be a great hunt of several days' duration. Ermolai is to remain behind: to send for Stépan, for money, for horses of the Ukraine breed: to watch Mitchka, to grow familiar with every corner of the huge chateau. And then the Count, left alone, soliloquizes. He is determined to go through with his design, but he is not in the least blinded to the wrong he is doing:—

I am a knave, a double-dealing scoundrel,  
To woo one girl the while I love another,  
For I do love her —  
What should I say of any other man?  
But then our own misdeeds are quite peculiar,  
White at the edges, shading into darkness,  
Not wholly black like other men's enormities.  
Theirs are the thunder-clouds; ours but the streaks  
Across the setting sun — No, no! I'm not  
A fool like that. I know full well 'tis base,  
Supremely base; nathless it shall be done.  
If there were time, some other course we might  
Devise; but that's what scoundrels always say —  
If there were time, they would replace, repay,  
In Virtue's silvery path they would walk leisurely.  
I am not duped by that. Seeing it all,  
Foreseeing all the misery, the mischief,  
I'll do't, I say, and take the guilt upon me.  
She shall be free.

Thus ends the First Act. It has indeed wrought an extraordinary change on the Count's feelings and position. The cool, pensive, unenergetic student of theological books, whose great aim was the progress of Russia, has had the latent fire of his nature touched at last.

In the Second Act we have the working of the Count's scheme. The hunt is over: the Prince and Count have returned to the chateau. The Small Wise Man has preceded them: cautioned the Princess that a merchant has arrived to buy Oulita and her fine voice for the Imperial Opera: advised that Oulita should not sing her best in his presence. Stépan, a shrewd fellow, appears: tells the Prince he has heard of Oulita, and with many disparaging remarks, desires to hear her sing. The Count, consulted by the Prince, speaks slightly of Oulita, and artfully suggests that the Prince's hunting-ground was somewhat hemmed in by an adjoining property, which might be bought. Oulita sings: but she has overheard the Count's remarks: she now knows who he is, and she wilfully sings to the very best of her power. She sings two songs: we extract the former as a specimen of the author's lyric art. It gives us the story of *The End of the Rebel Stenko-Razin's Love*: a story which is exactly true.

The barge was moored on Volga's shore, the stream  
Went murmuring sorrowfully past,  
The water-lilies played amidst the gleam  
Their golden armor, moon-lit, cast.

Mute sat the Persian captive by her mate,  
And gazed at her lover askance;  
A little of love and something of hate  
Were couched in that dubious glance.

"Base that I am," he cried, "dear stream, to thee,  
Who, rebel too, with zilling waves

Hast borne my armies up to victory,  
And floated down the gold and slaves."

He mused; he turned; and smiling on her charms  
He met that look of love and hate;  
Lightly he took her in his mailed arms,  
And casting, left her to her fate.

One lily more went shimmering 'midst the gleam  
Their golden armor, moon-lit, cast;  
That lily slowly sank beneath the stream;  
Volga went sadly murmuring past.

"Murmur no more," the chief replied, "no more;  
What I loved best to thee I gave."  
His fierce men shuddered, but from fear forbore  
The Persian lady's life to save.

The songs are received with great applause, and when silence follows Stépan criticizes in true musical cant:—

There is a something, and there is not a something. There is a feeling and there is not a feeling. But there are makings, makings, makings. The G is better than the Freduccini's G.

And after more in the like tone, he offers the Prince thirty thousand roubles. But the old gentleman is so vain of Oulita's triumph, that he absolutely refuses to part with her on any terms: and thus fails the Count's first idea.

But instant action becomes necessary. The Princess upbraids Oulita severely for singing so well, contrary to her arrangement; and goes on to speak of her meeting the Count in the wood. Oulita replies sharply: the Princess sentences her to Mitchka's lash in the morning. The Count upon this determines to rescue her that night. He is well aware of the risk he runs in the hands of the old Prince's vassals; but will brave it all. Oulita comes to him, and begs his intercession for her. He replies

coldly : but conveys in whispered interjected sentences his plan for her rescue. A striking scene follows, in which Vasili, who thinks he has Oulita in his power, tries entreaties and threats with equal unsuccess to gain her consent to be his wife. The Count and Ermolai deliberate. They have arranged to fire the chateau in the night, and carry Oulita away. Ermolai, with his tastes formed under Grübner, is delighted with the tact exhibited in the Count's plan : and when he leaves to arrange with the men, the Count thus speaks : —

We shall succeed — I will not let a doubt  
Intrude upon my mind, — we shall succeed.  
This one injustice may be remedied.  
But then the things that have been — why they come  
Upon me now I wot not: hideous deeds  
Long numbered with the past. The Earth may smile,  
And deck herself each May, vain thing! with flowers  
And seem forgetful of the cruelties  
Enacted on her ever-changing stage,  
Till every spot upon the storied surface  
Is rank with tragic memories: beauteous slaves,  
Like dear Oulita, forced to endure, half-crazed  
Caresses which they loathe — and children slain  
Before their mother's eyes — and women murdered  
(Happy if murdered soon) in the dear presence  
Of those who till that moment ever looked at them  
With reverent tenderness, and now dare not look;  
Whose corded limbs, straining in agony,  
Have lost — the wretch's last resort — the power  
To give them death.

The earth may smile, I say,  
But like a new-made widow's mirth, it shocks one.  
And she, the earth, should never quit her weeds;  
And should there come a happier race upon her,  
Ever there'll be a sighing of the wind,  
A moaning of the sea, to hint to that  
More favored race what we poor men have suffered.  
There must have been a history, they'll say  
To be interpreted by all these sighs  
And moans.

It is indeed a strange inconsistency, between the beauty and gayety of external nature, and the wickedness and misery of man. And it has existed ever since the Fall. The Vale of Siddim was "as the garden of the Lord," — fair as another Eden: the black blot there was man. And the natural beauty and the human wickedness had to be dashed from Creation together. "At that one spot, it is far towards four thousand years, since Nature bloomed and Man sinned, — for the last time."<sup>1</sup> We remember, too, what thought it was that came sadly to the mind of Bishop Heber, as he breathed the spicy air of Ceylon. Many a sad heart must have felt the sunshine and the green leaves a dreary mockery of the gloom within. And how hard it is to feel, that beyond that cheerful veil, there is hidden a Being of infinite power and infinite justice, who looks down quietly on the scene, and lets the world go on! Well, things will be set right some day.

His plans being thus arranged, the Count proceeds to the Hall, where there is a grand banquet. The Governor of the province proposes the health of the Count and his affianced bride, in a speech which is a happy imitation, by no means caricatured, of the speeches common in England after public dinners. In the middle of the banquet, somewhat prematurely, the flames break out. Great confusion follows, amid which Stépan bears off Oulita. But he is intercepted and brought back by Mitchka, who, as well as Vasili, had suspected the Count's design. The Count kills Mitchka: then he and Stépan bind Vasili, whom the latter must now take with him, as a refractory serf. Then the Count hurries Oulita off, with the words which close the Second Act.

<sup>1</sup> Foster.

I said you should be free, and free you are.  
Your horses wait; the road is clear to Moscow.  
He goes with you (*pointing to Stépan*), and will insure your safety,  
Nearer: a word! I loathe this hateful marriage.  
'Tis forced upon me by the Czar. Escape  
I may, and then —

No! this is not the time —  
When you are wholly free, you can reject me.

In the Third Act we are at Moscow. Grübner has guessed correctly as to the share the Count had in the fire at the Prince's chateau, about which the Prince has been constantly complaining to the police. Neither the Prince nor Princess has had the slightest suspicion. Oulita has been safely conveyed to Moscow, and is under the Count's care. The Count is maintaining appearances with the Princess; but is afraid of Siberia, to which the arson and homicide at the chateau would certainly send him, if brought home to him; and is perplexed how to deal honorably with the Princess, whose nature, with its fierce mixture of good and evil, is not one to be trifled with. Grübner has stated his suspicions to the Princess, who resolves to have an explanation with the Count. Accordingly, we have a striking scene, in which the Princess tells the Count that the police are on Oulita's track, and threatens fearful vengeance upon her when taken. The Count manfully avows what he has done, and leaves the Princess in a whirl of rage. But she admires and loves the Count still; and it is on Oulita that she determines her vengeance shall be wreaked.

However, she relents. A little later, while the Count is with Oulita, the police enter the house and seize her, to carry her back to Prince Lanskof. But their plans are disconcerted by Stépan producing a bill of sale, signed in due form by the Prince, which shows that Ou-

lita has been fairly sold to Stépan. The Princess, at a masked ball in the Kremlin, had placed this in the Count's hand. The police have to give up their prey. And when Grübner enters after a while with a file of soldiers, he finds that he is duped, and that Oulita is beyond his reach.

At the beginning of the Fourth Act, we find that the Count feels the meshes of the police closing round him. He is in his house at St. Petersburg, when Stépan enters to tell him that spies are now watching his house on every side. The Count feels that the odds against him are too great, and he must be beaten at last. The Czar, too, is becoming cold.

We next find Oulita in a room at St. Petersburg, working at embroidery. She is perfectly happy ; but change is near. The Small Wise Man has found out her retreat, and comes to tell her of the Princess's wrath, and the storming and vapping of her father. And now it breaks on poor Oulita's mind what peril the Count is incurring for her sake. She resolves to leave him, lest she should bring him to ruin ; and as a last resort, asks the Small Wise Man to give her poison which she might have within her reach. Then a most beautiful scene follows between Oulita and the Count. Her eyes, now awakened, see the traces of ceaseless anxiety and alarm on his altered face ; and he, wearied out, falls into deep sleep as he is telling her of his travels in other lands. Half-awaking, he thinks he is speaking to the Czar, and tells him that "if he but knew her, he would pardon all." He sinks to sleep again ; and Oulita, resolute, though broken-hearted, leaves her farewell written, and hastens away.

She has taken a desperate resolution. We next find the Princess in her chamber, brooding upon her wrongs, and wrought up to a tigress-fury. Even as she is declaring what fearful vengeance she would take of Oulita, Oulita enters and kneels at her feet. The scene which follows is one of the most striking in the play; and the more so that our extracts have been only of detached speeches, we shall quote this dialogue entire.

OULITA.

Madam, an outcast girl implores the pardon  
She dares not hope for.

PRINCESS.

Ha! He has left you then:

And you return, in those becoming robes,  
To penitence and virtue — rather late,  
Methinks.  
Speak, girl, unless you wish me to call Mitchka.  
Mitchka is dead, you think; there lives another.  
Say, has the Count forsaken you?

OULITA (*rising*).

The Count!

What Count?

PRINCESS.

Why this surpasses patience! What Count, minx, —  
That Count who was to be my husband, wretch;  
That Count who, to his eminent dishonor,  
Stole you away — set fire to his friend's palace —  
Slew that friend's servants — decked you out, great lady  
In this fine garb — who broke his plighted word  
For you, — the Count von Straubenheim.

OULITA.

You know, then?

PRINCESS.

There is no thread of his and your intrigues  
Unknown to me. He told me of your love.

OULITA.

Permit me now to speak. Of a return,  
You spoke, to virtue. There is no return.  
A woman might have thought more charitably,  
Of any sister-woman, though a serf :  
Madam, there's no return, I say, to virtue,  
And none to penitence, though much to sorrow.  
I loved the Count, 'tis true, yet not to love  
I fled, but to escape a shame one maiden  
Should hardly have inflicted on another.  
I saw the Count again. I listened — who  
Would not? — to his fond words and vows repeated  
To make this slave in other climes his wife.  
But soon the bloodhounds were upon the track.  
I heard, or seemed to hear, the avenger's baying,  
Marked the ignoble lines of care — his care  
For me — indenting that majestic brow :  
'Twas then that I divined his danger, sought  
To save his life, myself surrendering  
To all your sternest cruelty might do.  
I am too late, and am prepared to bear  
The now most thriftless, useless penalty.  
But hear: men are most wayward in their fancies;  
He should have worshipped at your shrine, great Princess.  
Perhaps it was your very excellence  
Made him decline to such a thing as me.  
He ever spoke of you with tenderest homage.

PRINCESS.

He did?

OULITA.

He did; and one there was who sat beside him,  
Who joyed to hear your praises, for the Count  
Said ever you were most magnanimous, —  
Great as a foe, and splendid as a friend.

PRINCESS.

And nothing else, the while he played with those  
Fair tresses, said the Count, — nothing about  
My furious temper, and the difference 'twixt  
Mine and the soft Oulita's, — nothing, girl?  
Sealing his pretty sayings with a kiss —  
The false, the perjured man.

OULITA.

Not false, nor perjured.

PRINCESS.

Ah, now we stir the meek one.

OULITA.

What he said

In rare disparagement of your great charms,  
Was such indeed as might make any woman  
Desire the more to win the man who said it. —  
By that dread suffering image that looks down  
On us this moment, I would die to win  
His love for you; would worm myself into  
His heart, to find an entrance there for you,  
And thus insure his safety and your joy:  
That safety being — for I'll not deceive you, —  
The chiefest aim in life for me. Dear Princess —

*[Puts her arm round the PRINCESS.]*

You used to let me call you dear, — be true  
To your great mind. Let's set our women's wits  
To work, to make the man love you. There only  
His safety lies — and there his happiness.  
'Tis you alone are worthy of the Count.  
With you to aid his plans, to fix his purposes,  
Partake success with him, console in failure,  
Cheering with your bright wit his melancholy,  
He will become the greatest man in Russia.

PRINCESS.

How blind is pride! The Count was right, Oulita,  
Were I a man I should have loved you best.  
Save him we will, but not for me, Oulita.  
I am not worthy of him, nor of you.  
Nay, let me kneel to you. Could you but know  
What savage thoughts I've had, you ne'er could love me.  
Let me but kiss — that shudder was not wickedness, —  
I do not grudge his fondness for that cheek.  
I meant that I must love what he had loved,  
And I do love it *[kisses her]*. We'll rest together, dear,  
And early morn shall find us planning rescue.  
His peril is most urgent. I did not  
Betray him; nay, I saved him once. Your Marie

Was not in all things bad, — not always wicked.  
 Ah, could you but have known, that fatal day  
 My heedless passion threatened you with stripes —

*[Puts her hand before her eye.]*

I am ashamed to look at you, and say  
 The base word stripes, — could you have known how tender  
 I felt to you, never so much before,  
 And how I roamed and roamed about in agony,  
 Contriving some excuse to make you ask  
 Your pardon, and none came, you must, you would  
 Have pitied me.  
 Down at your feet I could have humbly knelt,  
 Imploring you to kneel at mine, Oulita;  
 Indeed I could. But then my odious pride  
 Stiffened my soul again.

OULITA.

But more, you say,  
 Than ever, then, you loved your own Oulita.

PRINCESS.

What is the worth of my love that could do  
 So little battle with my pride?

OULITA.

We poor ones,  
 Who from our infancy are curbed and bent,  
 And bounded in, know little of the pangs  
 The great endure in mastering their pride  
 Long-seated, deep-engrained.

PRINCESS.

Generous Oulita,  
 Always some foolish, fond excuse for me,  
 I almost feel I love the Count the more  
 For being wise and great enough to love thee,  
 Discerning thy rare qualities beneath  
 The sorry mask of serfdom —  
 The world would scarce believe its mocking eyes  
 If it could see two women loving madly  
 One man, and yet the fonder of each other.  
 Is it not so, Oulita?

OULITA.

Dearest. It is.

## PRINCESS.

Not dearest, I must tell the Count if you  
Say that fond word to any other soul.

*[OULITA hides her head on the PRINCESS's breast. They embrace — they kneel before the image in the corner of the room. The curtain falls.]*

Thus the noble womanhood of the Princess's nature asserts itself: and thus the Fourth Act ends.

At the beginning of the Fifth Act, the Count, awaking from a fearful dream, finds Oulita's letter, telling him she has fled to save him from ruin, and begging that he would never let it be known that he had aided her in her escape. Even as he reads it, Grübner and his men are upon him. The Count retains his firmness, but tells Grübner that he is beaten. He is carried away, to be placed before the Czar.

And now, in Prince Lanskof's house, Oulita meets the Small Wise Man, and claims his promise to provide her poison. He gives her what, rubbed upon the lips, will in three minutes cause death; but he speaks as follows:—

Promise me this. Before  
You use this fatal gift of mine, bring back —  
Bring clearly back — to a calm mind, the days  
When first your mother's smile was dear, when first  
She trusted to your care your little brother,  
And anxiously the little nurse upheld  
The child, as you both strayed beside the stream —  
I've often wandered there — which marked your garden,  
To you a world of waters; then your father,  
The ponderous man, laid his large hand upon  
Your head, saying you were his wise Oulita —  
Then think, was this the end for which they toiled,  
And if, on thinking thus, you can resolve  
In one rash moment to obliterate  
What they so prized — why then God's blessing on you.  
I can say nothing more.

We are next carried to the palace, where we find the Emperor and Grübner in conversation. We find that the Count is already on his way into Siberian exile; but the Emperor, who loves him, bitterly laments that there is no loophole for pardoning him. Grübner goes, and then a serf almost forces her way into the imperial presence. It is Oulita, now resolute in despair. A noble scene follows, which we regret we cannot find space to extract. She boldly tells the Emperor that greater men than the Count have loved where they should not; she justifies the Count against the charge of arson and murder; says Mitchka fell in fair fight; and appealing to the Emperor closely, declares that if the Countess whom he loved were sentenced to be scourged, and he burnt down a city to save her, she would not think less of the Czar. The Czar thinks she wishes to follow the Count; but is astonished when he learns that what she wishes is that he should wed the Princess. The Emperor grasps at the idea: says all might then be hushed; but adds that neither Princess nor Count would consent. But the poor Princess, the gentle woman at last, has come with Oulita in a page's dress; and when the Emperor asks her if she will marry the Count, reminding her at the same time of her own slighted affection and her father's wrongs, she replies humbly that she will, and not seek his love, nor ask him to live with her. The Emperor instantly signs a pardon, and tells them to hasten with it along the road to Siberia. Still he fears that the Count, however much he loves liberty, will hardly make a marriage serve as a means of safety. But he bids them God speed, and says at least they may try.

Then we are at a village on the road to Siberia.

We hear in the distance the "Song of the Exiles;" and a train of exiles enters, among whom is the Count. Ermolaï is there, kindly attending his fallen master; and the Count eagerly asks him of Oulita. There enter Oulita, the Princess veiled, and the Small Wise Man. They look anxiously among the prisoners, and at length recognize the Count. The Count sees Oulita, and bursts into a joyful speech, assuring her that the evil dreaded so much dwindles when it haps at last. She tells the Count of the conditional pardon she bears, and entreats him to marry the Princess. He declares that he is incapable of such baseness. Oulita then brings the Small Wise Man, hoping that his reasonings may move the Count: but the Count states the case to him; and he declares the Count is right. The Count then speaks to Oulita; says he will yet return and claim her:—

If not, I have a loving memory always by me,  
 Something to think of when I sit beside  
 My hut, amidst the unheeded falling snow,  
 Of evenings, when my sorry work is done.  
 Better so sit, so thinking, than in palaces—  
 A thought of inextinguishable baseness  
 Fast clinging round the soul.

Then he asks Oulita if she had often thought of him —

Once only, Edgar;—  
 But that thought lasted long.

And still entreating him to wed the Princess, and so himself for usefulness and honor, she applies the to her lips, and dies as she joins their hands. Oulita judged that by thus unselfishly sacrificing she would make the Count feel himself free. as a useless sacrifice. He tells the Princess he er now, for her true love for the dead; but he

has no heart to offer. No word says the Princess, her haughty spirit quite cowed and broken ; Ermolai receives his master's last request to bury Oulita where she died, and to mark her grave ; and as the sad song of the exiles is resumed, the Count, seemingly stunned beyond present sense of his utter desolation, kisses Oulita's face, and resumes his march towards Siberia. Ah, the agony and wildness of grief will be upon him to-morrow ! And by the fair serf's corpse, in whose sad lot and noblest heart we have grown to feel an interest so profound, there sits, with covered face, the Small Wise Man ; — a jester to smile at no more, but a figure of overwhelming pathos.

*L'honneur oblige !* How hard some men would find it to understand the invisible restraints that drove the Count into exile, while fortune, fame, and power were beckoning him back if he would but come ! And how hard, too, to understand Oulita's noble self-devotion ; and the self-devotion of the Princess, scarcely less complete !

And now, as we draw our notice of the tragedy to a close, we turn over the pages once more : and, as at every opening of the volume, our eye falls upon some beautiful felicity of expression, some lifelike incident that almost startles by the every-day reality it gives the story, some thought so deep, gentle, and kind, wherein the author's own mind speaks to his reader, — we feel how far such an abstract as our space enables us to give, falls short of the effect which would be produced by the perusal of the play itself on the heart of every generous man and gentle woman. We do not think that our nerves are shattered into a morbid facility of emotion, and the hand that writes these lines is not a woman's

yet we should hardly like to tell how often the tear has started as we read this book, — how many hours it kept sleep away, — or even how often and how long we have paused and mused with the finger in the half-closed volume. We do not pretend to much acquaintance with stage-craft; and it is possible enough that the very thoughtfulness which makes *Oulita* so fascinating to the solitary scholar, might detract from its power of popular effect were it represented on the stage. For ourselves, we do not think it would. There is incident rapid and stirring enough to keep attention ever on the stretch: and the reflections are such that while arresting the thoughtful reader who can follow the track along which they point, they will touch the mind and heart of average humanity. Of course, if *Hamlet* were published at the present day, many critics would call it dull and heavy, and many theatrical managers would not risk its presentation on their boards. And the variety of rhythm and cadence, the occasional abruptness and deviation from common metrical rules, which render the versification of a vigorous drama such as some judges would call unmusical, seem to our mind a beauty and an excellence in verse which is meant to be spoken and heard, rather than to be read; which represents real and passing life; which is put in the mouth of many diverse characters; and which is to be listened to without intermission for two or three successive hours. *Smoothness*, in Pope's use of the word, would pall and disgust by so long continuance. And only great variety of metrical character — even the occurrence of occasional discords — can furnish the similitude of life. When one goes to the Opera, one must be content to leave common sense at the door, and to take for granted that all that

passes shall go on the basis of an extreme conventionality. But in the case of a tragedy, if the writing and the presentation be worthy, the spectator should forget that he is not looking at reality. The author of *Oulita* has kept this in view. Yet while remembering that unvaried melody of rhythm would result in satiety and tediousness, no one knows better how to add the charm of music to thoughts with which it accords. Very beautifully, in the lines which follow, have we Mr. Thackeray's ever-recurring philosophy of the affections, even in the trimness of modern life : —

So dear that in the memory she remains,  
Like an old love, who would, indeed, have been  
Our only love, but died; and all the past  
Is full of her untried perfections, while  
Amidst the unknown recesses of our hearts  
Enthroned she sits, in tenderest mist of thought,  
Like the soft brilliancy of autumn haze,  
Seen at the setting of the sun.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

BEING AN EPISTLE TO THE EDITOR OF "FRASER'S MAGAZINE," FROM HIS FRIEND, CHARLES ARDERSIER-MACDONALD, ESQ., OF CRAIG-HOULAKIM, NEAR WHISTLE-BINKIE, N. B.

**W**HEN I was a Country Parson, my dear friend the Editor of a certain eminent magazine came one autumn to pay me a visit. Among my most valued neighbors was a certain country squire, whom (for various reasons) I shall call Mr. Macdonald of Craig-Houlakim. When the Editor and Mr. Macdonald met, it appeared that they were old college friends, though they had died out of acquaintance for some years. The meeting was a very pleasant one: and the Editor was much amused by Mr. Macdonald's description of some of our Scotch institutions. Mr. Macdonald promised to give the Editor an account in writing of some of these: and thus originated the following letter. I may say, that in the main, I concur in the views it sets out: though they seem to me expressed with a little too much vehemence. And let me add, that Mr. Macdonald did not reside in my parish: so you will not find in his letter any reference to me.

My Dear Editor, — When you paid us a visit last autumn, and renewed so pleasantly an old college acquaintance which “change of place and change of folk” had interrupted for eight or ten years, you were wont, in your usual saturnine vein, to laugh at the completeness with which I had fallen into Scotch ways of thinking and acting. I have indeed become so familiar with the usages of my adopted country, that I see nothing very wonderful now in things which utterly astonished you, and which indeed had a similar effect upon myself when I was a freshly-imported Saxon. *Quantum mutatus ab illo*, I know you thought, who ten years since walked in your company the quadrangles of Oxford, bent upon those classical studies which (owing entirely to the bad arrangements of the University) failed to get me so distinguished a degree as my sisters and my grandmother thought I deserved, — not a little given to Puseyite notions in church matters, and in a state of total ignorance as to Scotch affairs. But time (as philosophers have on several occasions observed) works wonders. It is not yet ten years since the death of a distant and eccentric relative, whom I had never seen, made me the possessor of this property, in a district of Scotland which, I think, yields to none in beauty and interest. It is less than that time since I resolved to patch up this quaint old baronial dwelling, and make it my head-quarters for the greater part of the year. And I dare say you were surprised to find me so completely transformed into the Scotch country squire, — walking you after breakfast daily to the stables, and boring you with long stories about the hocks and pasterns of my horses; not a little vain of my turnips; quite proud of my shaggy little bullocks (finer animals than deer, I always maintain); and

full of statistics about the yearly growth of my young plantations, and the girth of the noble old oaks and horse-chestnuts on the lawn. But I am sure you were much more surprised to find that I had settled down into a douce elder of the Kirk, — quite *au fait* in Scotch ecclesiastical polity, much interested in matters parochial, and loud in praise of Professor Robertson and the Endowment Scheme; and though still a warmly-attached member of the Church of England, yet a good Presbyterian when in Scotland, and quite persuaded that in all essential points the Church of England and the Kirk of Scotland are thoroughly at one. I have been fortunate in my parish clergyman, whom you met more than once while here, and whom you found, I dare say, quite different from the violent, Covenanting, true-blue Knoxite you probably expected. You found him, I am sure, quite of our way of thinking in regard to most things sacred and civil: quite anxious to have his church as ecclesiastical in appearance as even Mr. Beckett Denison would wish; quite friendly to the introduction of an organ; not hostile to the restoration of the Liturgy; and, indeed, not so much shocked as he ought to have been when you and I speculated as to the probable time that must elapse before the peaceable reception of episcopal government. Let me add to these points of æsthetic nature that, like most of his brethren, he goes through all his parochial duties with great assiduity, and conducts the church-service of each Sunday with a propriety which would be excellent even on your side of the Tweed. When you went with me to the parish church, you were somewhat shocked at seeing the country-people coming in with their hats on, and rushing out as though the place were on fire, the instant the last "Amen" was

#### 408 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

spoken; and I did not expect that you would like the bare and bald ritual of the Kirk as much as your own beautiful service. Still, in the carefully-prepared prayers you heard, there was nothing of that rambling rigmarole of extemporaneous extravagance which makes one long for a Liturgy to keep people to common sense. And as for the sermon you heard from Mr. Smith, I think that, save for its not being read, and for a shade more warmth of manner in the delivery of it, it was very much such as your excellent rector gives you every Sunday morning. And though I am not much delighted with some of Lord Palmerston's recent ecclesiastical appointments, and cannot understand why such men as Mr. Melvill and Mr. Chenevix Trench are not raised to the episcopal bench in the abundance of recent vacancies, still I have grown so much of a Presbyterian in feeling, that I am pleased to find a Scotchman, brought up in the Scotch Kirk, made your metropolitan bishop. Dr. Tait has, I believe, two brothers who are elders of the Kirk; one of them, Sheriff Tait, being a prominent speaker in the General Assembly.

The change has come upon me by degrees; and really, till you were here in September, I was hardly aware how far, by familiarity with Scotch modes of thinking and acting, I had grown into a development which must seem strange in an old friend's eyes. As you know, I go little to England: my wife and weans (the latter of whom often loudly express their hope that you will soon come back again) are a tie to home; and one great pleasure of a country life is, that every day of the year, winter as well as summer, brings with it something to interest one. Horses, cows, pigs, dogs, pheasants, wheat, potatoes, newly-planted trees and evergreens, are a constant

source of occupation : there is always a host of little changes and improvements going on about a country-place, which there is a pleasure in overseeing. Yet one need not grow a mere clod, like some of my thick-headed neighbors whom you met, who had never heard of Mr. Thackeray or of *Fraser's Magazine*, and who thought that Mr. Ruskin was a slang name for the Emperor of Russia. My daily hours of work in my library make me enjoy all the more a scamper on horseback, a stroll to the home-farm, or a walk through the young plantations. And notwithstanding your pity for me, cut off, as you thought, from the world of intellect, I assure you, my dear Editor, when you told me of all your toils and cares, pleasant and elevating as they may be, I thought it would be well for you, mentally and physically, to spend six months at Craig-Houlakim, where your pulse would get to beat more leisurely, where the flame of life would burn away less fast, and, like wise old Walton, you might "study to be quiet." And I put it to you, as an intelligent being, if my own personal appearance did not, by its healthy animalism, say a great deal for this calm mode of life. I don't think I am any stupider than I used to be when we were companions long ago ; but am I not twice as strong, twice as active — ay, and twice as rosy, though I never drink whiskey-toddy ?

There is no doubt of it, my dear fellow, that Scotland and England are very different countries, after all. I do not know what may be the particular train of reflection which is started in the mind of people in general by witnessing the departure of the Scotch mail-train from Euston-square at nine P. M. ; but for myself, the thought which always impresses me is, what opposite states of things that train forms a link between. The carriage

#### 410 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

which bears the little board on its side, with LONDON AND EDINBURGH, will in the next few hours run not merely out of one country into another, with another climate and scenery ; but also into another race of men, another religion, another church, another law, another way of thinking upon all conceivable subjects. Scotland and England, in short, are quite different countries. Many things which are quite familiar in each, are unknown in the other. And though between the educated classes of the two countries there is now much similarity, still it will be long before electric wires and express trains shall assimilate Pall-Mall and Prince's-street, St. Giles's and the Goosedubs.

It has always been an interesting thing to me to witness the departure of the great trains for the North. My feeling is, that the dignity and poetry of a railway train are in direct proportion to the distance it has to run. Who cares about the departure of a Greenwich train, that will reach its journey's end in ten minutes? It is quite different with one that, after quitting the brightly-lighted and bustling station, is to go on and on, hour after hour through the long dark night, score after score of miles through the wide blank country, and between the lights of fifty sleeping towns. By the side of the broad smooth platform is the long row of low dark carriages, so snug-looking internally with their warm lamp-light, their thick blue cushions, their heaps of wraps of all kinds. There is a crowd of passengers hurrying to and fro ; a rapid whirl of barrows of luggage ; a display of men and women in every variety of dress which has the association of warmth. At length we are all stowed in our places ; rugs are folded over knees, travelling caps are endued, reviews and newspapers are

cut up ; and the train is off, gliding with a fluent motion through the dark. For an hour or two passengers read, and even talk a little ; then gradually drop off into a sleep, which is disturbed at intervals through the night by the glare and thunder of some passing engine, fearfully snorting and panting, or by the chilly rush of raw air as the guard opens the door to ask a sight of the tickets at some large station on the road. Thus we sweep through the rich heart of England : along the valley of the Trent — through Staffordshire — through crowded Lancashire ; and at length waken to full consciousness among the Cumberland hills, where the passing train sends the sheep scampering, and startles the hare from her resting-place. Then comes the comfortable though hurried breakfast in that most baronial refreshment-room at Carlisle ; a few miles further on we cross the little river Sark, enter Dumfries-shire, and are in Scotland. Wild hills yet, which give the new-comer a dreary impression, and a very unfair one, of the country he has entered ; ninety or a hundred miles are rapidly skimmed over ; and at the end of twelve or thirteen hours from Euston-square, we hear a howling of Embra' or Gleska, as the case may be, and we emerge from the carriage to which we had grown quite attached, and find ourselves in a new world. No educated Englishman needs to be told nowadays that Scotchmen do not wear tartan, — that the figures one sees at the doors of tobacco-shops in London have no prototypes in the North, — that a kilt is seen just as frequently in Regent-street as on the Calton-hill, and that those persons who describe themselves when in England as **THE MAC TODDY** or **THE MAC LOSKY**, know rather better than to make fools of themselves by assuming such designations when at home. Still we

412 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

have things among us here which you know nothing about ; and I am going to give you some idea of one or two of our "peculiar institutions." I have before my eyes the recent fate of Mr. Macaulay, when he recorded certain unpalatable truths in regard to Scotland, his "respected mither." But what I say shall be said in all good-nature ; and I do not believe that the sensible portion of my adopted compatriots forms such a *genus irritabile* as you might fancy from reading about the doings of the Society for maintaining Scottish Rights.

Do you remember one morning when you were here, the post-bag yielding a Glasgow newspaper, which having glanced at I pitched with indignation into the fire ? The reason was, that it contained a long report of a proceeding which no acquaintance with it will ever make tolerable to me, or indeed make anything but revolting and disgusting : I mean what is called a *Congregational Soirée* in the City Hall at Glasgow. Such things are very common among the dissenters ; and I am sorry to say they are not quite unknown in the church. There are some congregations consisting exclusively of the lower orders, whose ministers maintain a certain popularity by dint of roaring and ranting, and every kind of wretched claptrap which appeals to the mob. And these men find it expedient to have a *soirée* (pronounced *surree*, with a strong accent on the latter syllable) annually. I need not tell you that the more dignified and respectable among the clergy utterly abhor such things. I could no more fancy my excellent friend, Dr. Muir of Edinburgh, spouting nonsense on a platform to excite the laughter of maid-servants, than I could picture the Archbishop of Canterbury preaching while standing on his head. But let me try to give you some idea of what the thing is.

I have had occasion once or twice to see the City Hall at Glasgow. Whenever the freedom of the city is given to any eminent man, the ceremony takes place there, the Lord Provost making a speech on the occasion. It is a large ugly building, in a street called the Candleriggs, which runs out of the Trongate, the main artery of Glasgow traffic. It is very large, holding some three or four thousand people. It is simply a huge square room, with a flat ceiling. Galleries surround it on three sides: on the fourth side is a large platform, backed by a fine organ. It has a cheerful appearance, being painted throughout in white and gold. This Hall is used for all kinds of purposes; the Corporation, very shabbily I think, making a profit by letting it out to any one who may want it. There the Wizard of the North was wont for many a day to perform his tricks: there did Mr. Barnum exhibit Tom Thumb: there have Jenny Lind and Grisi sung: there does Jullien yearly give a course of concerts: there has Kosstth spoken, and there Mr. Macaulay, Lord Elgin, the Duke of Argyle, Mr. Dickens, and a greater man than all, Sir Archibald Alison: there has Mr. George Thompson howled: there has the Anti-State-Church Association made itself ridiculous: there next day have the friends of the Kirk rallied by thousands; and on the day after, the advocates of the Democratic and Social Republic: there have been held cattle-show dinners and Crimean banquets; and there *soirées* in honor of all sorts and conditions of men, from Mrs. Beecher Stowe down to Mr. Stiggins (who became a dissenting minister in Whistlebinkie after his historic kicking by the senior Mr. Weller): and after this pleasing variety of engagements during the week, the Hall is set for divine service on Sunday. There hath the Rev

#### 414 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

Dr. Bahoo wept, and the Rev. Mr. Spurgeon bellowed there hath a young scamp of ten years old preached to a congregation of thousands; and thence hath the Rev. Mr. McQuack retired with a collection of £3 15s. 2½d for the mission to send flannel waistcoats and moral pocket-handkerchiefs to the uninstructed Howowows.

The first announcement of the approaching festival is an advertisement in the Glasgow newspapers that a Congregational Soirée of St. Gideon's Church will be held in the City Hall upon a certain evening: The Rev. Dr. Bahoo, M. A., D. D., LL.D., in the chair. Addresses will be delivered by the Rev. Melchisedec Howler, the Rev. Jeremy Diddler (Missionary to Borrioboolagha), the Rev. Roaring Buckie (of Yellington-cum-Bellow), the Rev. Soapy Sneaky (domestic chaplain to the Hon. Scapegrace Blackleg), and the Rev. Mountybanke Buf-fune. By the kind permission of Col. Blazes, the band of the gallant 969th will attend. Tickets, including a paper of sweeties, a cooky, two figs, and five cups of tea, price, eight pence each. N. B. — A collection at the door, *to prevent confusion*.

The proceedings begin at six o'clock upon the appointed evening, by which hour the people are seated at long tables arranged in the Hall, displaying a large assortment of tea-cups of many varied patterns. Each person on entering has received a paper-bag, containing the promised cooky (you would call it a penny-bun), the figs, and the sweeties. The platform is covered with men, the leading individuals of the congregation, and the speakers of the evening. *That* is Mr. Soapy Sneaky, with the long lank hair, the blue spectacles, and the diabolical squint. That fat, round little man is Dr. Bahoo, already affected to tears by the contemplation of so many tea-

cups, and by the reflection that they will all be broken within the next hundred years. That is Melchisedec Howler, with tremendously-developed jaws and a bull-neck, but hardly any perceptible forehead. And that is Mr. Buckie, with the apoplectic face, and corpulent figure. First, a Psalm is sung; then a long prayer is offered. The band of the 969th then plays a polka. Next greasy men go round, and pour tea of uninviting appearance out of large kettles into the numberless tea-cups. The men on the platform partake of the same cheering beverage. A great clatter of crockery is heard: many of the guests, ere they have finished their fifth cup (they are breakfast-cups) become visibly distended: most of the children find it expedient to stand up. Tea being over, the military band plays the "March of the Cameron Men," or "Bonnie Dundee," amid great shouting and stamping. The Rev. Dr. Bahoo, the minister of the congregation, then gets up and makes a speech in the nature of a sermon, with a few jokes thrown in. The reverend gentleman gets much excited. He frequently weeps during his speech, and in a little laughs again. He tells the people how hawppee he is to see them awl: how many additional seats have been let in St. Gideon's Church during the past year: how many scores of Sawba schule teachers and Sawba scholars are connected with the congregation. A Psalm is then sung by the people: a polka follows: then there is a pause to allow the figs to be eaten. Then the Rev. Melchisedec Howler addresses the meeting. He shouts and stamps: he bellows out his ungrammatical fustian with perfect confidence. Happy man, he is so great a fool that he has not the faintest suspicion that he is a fool at all. Streams of perspiration flow down his face. In leaving the Hall,

you will hear the general remark among the enlightened audience, "Wasna' yon gran'?" "Oh, but he *swat extraordinar*." The meeting goes on for three or four hours, with the same strange jumble of prayers and polkas, religion and buffoonery, tears of penitence and roars of laughter. At length, about ten or eleven at night, after three cheers for the chairman, the benediction is pronounced, and the festival is ended.

Well, my dear Editor, is not that a peculiar institution, with a vengeance? I assure you I am not exaggerating or caricaturing, in my description of the hateful exhibition. Anything more irreverent and revolting than what I have myself witnessed (for I went out of curiosity to two or three such scenes) cannot be. I have seen clergymen say and do things at them which were just as degrading as if they had shaved their heads, painted their faces with ochre, put on a spangled dress, and tumbled head over heels. I have stated that the more staid and reputable clergy utterly eschew such meetings: most of the ministers who appear at them are men prepared to have recourse to the very lowest and most contemptible means in order to gain a wretched popularity with the least intelligent of the community. Don't you feel that Dr. Bahoo and Mr. Howler would preach standing on their heads, if *that* would draw a crowd to the scene of their buffooneries? Don't you feel that they would severally sing *Hot codlins* from the pulpit, rather than see the boxes deserted and the pit empty? They are simply tenth-rate melodramatic actors; and I will speak of them as such.

Now for another Scotch peculiarity.

I remember well your look of amazement when, one

day as we drove past a whitewashed barn a few miles off, I said to you, "That is the parish church of Timmerstane-parva." You thought at first that I wished to practise on your credulity, in return for certain wicked mystifications which you practised upon me in our college days. But I spoke in sober sadness. We have abundance of churches in Scotland which no mortal would ever guess were churches; buildings without one trace of Christian character; whitewashed barns externally, with a belfry at one end; and internally, just four walls and a flat roof, with a higgledy-piggledy of rickety pews, and a rude box at one end to serve for a pulpit. Now I have no doubt that you thought all this was the remaining leaven of the sour Puritan spirit: and that you supposed that the mass of the Scotch people really think that God is most likely to be worshipped in sincerity between walls green with damp and streaming with moisture, and under a flat ceiling whence large pieces of plaster are wont to detach themselves during divine service. You were quite mistaken if you took up any such impression. There are one or two bigoted sects which have inherited the spirit of the Covenanters, among which a good deal of stupid prejudice still lingers; and the people of these sects would very probably prefer Timmerstane Kirk to York Minster. But I am sure the well-filled pews you saw in our parish church testify that Scotch people will come very willingly to a decent church when they can find one; and if you knew what frantic efforts the dissenting congregations in large towns make to imitate our cathedrals in cheap lath-and-plaster Gothic, you would be convinced that it is no preference for shabbiness and dirt on the part of the people that keeps numbers of Scotch kirks the disreputable places they are. No, my

dear Editor; I wish to reveal to you, and through you to your countless readers, including so great a portion of the intelligence and refinement of England, what is the real blight of Scotch church architecture. It is, in brief, the abominable, mean, dirty, and contemptible shabbiness and parsimony of a great many of the *heritors* of Scotland. But what are the *heritors*, you will say, and what have they to do with the churches? I will tell you all about it.

The heritors of a parish are the proprietors of land within it. They are bound by law to build and maintain the church and parsonage. They likewise pay the stipend of the clergyman. Now, of course, when they or their fathers bought their estates, they got them for so much less in consideration of these circumstances. The primary charge upon all the land of Scotland is the Church Establishment; and in rendering its due to the church, the heritors are simply fulfilling the condition on which they hold their property, — doing what it would be dishonest not to do; and they are, manifestly, no more entitled to take credit for maintaining the church and clergyman, than the farmer is entitled to flap his wings and cry aloud, “I am a virtuous man; I am a hero in morality; I actually pay my landlord his rent!” Now many heritors forget all this: they fancy that the church is a burden upon them; and they endeavor by every shabby dodge to render that burden as light as possible. You see I don’t spare the class to which I myself belong: as a general rule, in all church matters, we are about as mean a set as you can find in Europe. Very many of us are dipped in debt, and are struggling to maintain an appearance quite beyond our means. I have in my mind’s eye at this moment at least a score of men who

are the very ideal of Mr. Thackeray's *Country Snob*. We really have not a sixpence to spare; and we must save all we can off the Kirk. And the rascally barns which in so many places do duty as parish churches, testify to our shabbiness and that of our fathers. No doubt there are many noble exceptions to what I have been saying. Here and there one finds a really beautiful and ecclesiastical church, testifying to the liberality of Mr. Stirling of Keir, Mr. Tyndall Bruce of Falkland, or Colonel Cathcart of Craigengillan. And the Duke of Buccleugh, a nobleman in the best sense of the phrase, is a splendid instance of liberality in all church matters. A writer in *The Times* told us lately that we country gentlemen of Scotland were such a race of snobs, that if the duke became a Mormon, we should all believe in Joe Smith too. I have no doubt a great many of us would. But you won't find us imitating that eminent personage when the act to be imitated consists in putting our hand in our pocket. No: we are independent men, who think for ourselves when it comes to *that*! And an especial evil is, that at a meeting of the heritors of a parish, each person has an equal voice. A man with ten thousand a year has one vote only, and so has the proprietor of a pigsty. Neighboring proprietors don't like to come to loggerheads, and divisions are avoided at such meetings. And so, as the weakest link in a chain is the limit of its strength, the shabbiest heritor at a meeting is generally the limit of its liberality.

I have been reading with great interest and pleasure Mr. Beckett Denison's *Lectures on Church-building*. If that accomplished gentleman would pay me a visit, I think I could astonish him. I could show him men, passably intelligent on other topics, who in the matter of

church-building utterly gainsay and deny those elementary principles which appear to Mr. Denison and myself as indisputable as any axiom in morals. I will back a meeting of Scotch heritors against any collection of men anywhere in the world, for dense ignorance, dogged obstinacy, and comfortable self-conceit. I should imagine the feelings of a man driving a large flock of refractory pigs to market, must be much what mine were when I first set to work to persuade my brother heritors of this parish to build the handsome church you saw here. I don't believe that Lord Clarendon needed more diplomatic skill to manage matters at the Paris Congress, than was requisite to talk over some of the miserable little scrubs of small proprietors into common sense. The upshot was, that Sir ——— and I agreed to bear the entire expense, provided the matter were left to our own management. About two thirds of the parish belong to us; the remainder being parcelled out among some five-and-forty heritors. We paid the share of these men in addition to our own; and though they were not involved in the work to the extent of a sixpence, they still cast every vexatious annoyance in our way.

Let me try to give you an idea of a meeting of heritors. It is held in the church. About ten minutes before the appointed hour, we see three or four blue-nosed pragmatistical looking old fellows approaching, arrayed in long brown great-coats of remote antiquity, each man wearing a shocking bad hat. These are some of the smaller heritors, each possessor of a few bare acres of moor-land in some wild part of the parish. They are certainly Dissenters, probably Cameronians; and quite ready at a word to smite the prophets of Baal, as they would call your amiable bishop or your good rector.

They look around in a hostile and perverse manner, and snuff the air like wild asses' colts. A little after comes a man with a red pimply face, a hoarse voice, and a bullying manner. He is the *factor* of some proprietor who is ashamed to do dirty work himself, but does not object to having it done for him. Then comes a little withered anatomy of a man, a retired Manchester tradesman, who has bought a few fields, planted them with hoaks and hashies, and built there an Ouse from his own design, a great work of hart. Half-a-dozen more blue-nosed small heritors, two or three more factors, and one or two gentlemen, complete the meeting. Suppose they are examining the drawings of the new kirk. Oh, rare are their critical remarks.

"Aw doant see ony need for a speere," says one low fellow. "Whawt's that croass doin' abooove the gahble?" says another; "we're no gangin' to hawve a rawg o' papistry in this pawrish." "If that's the way to build a church," says a pig-headed blockhead who never saw a decent church in his life, "I know nothing aboot church-building." Sober truth the creature utters; but he fancies he is talking sarcastically. Something is said of an open roof. "Wha ever saw a roof like thawt?" says one of the blue-nosed men; "thawt's jist like maw barrrn." A Cameronian elder says, in a discordant whine, "Goad is to be wurshupped in spurrit and in trewth: whawt house will ye big unto him? Habakkuk thirteenth and fifth." "Stained glass," says a pert little shopkeeper from Whistlebinkie, "is essentially Popish and Anti-christ." Finally a burst of coarse laughter follows the witticism, from an individual with a strong smell of whiskey, — "If Mr. Macdoanald wants the kirk sae fine, let him pye for it himself. Aw heer he was bred at

Ooxfurd; maybe he wants us a' to turn prelatists. He had better gang awa' bawlk to Inglan' wi' his papish notions." At this juncture the honorable proprietor's utterance becomes indistinct, and in a little a loud snoring proclaims that he is asleep. While the discussion is going on, some of the heritors are spitting emulously at a pew door about a dozen feet off. They generally hit it, with a dexterity resulting from long practice.

What wonder if educated men and gentlemen avoid such meetings? And thus, unhappily, the management of matters falls into the hands of some blowsy village demagogue, whose impertinence has driven the squire or baronet of the parish away; or of two or three of the withered old Cameronians with the long brown great-coats.

The Scotch are not a demonstrative race. I do not believe that among our laboring class here in the country, there is any want of real heart and feeling; but there is a great awkwardness and stiffness in the expression of it. People here do not give utterance to their emotion like your volatile Frenchman: they have not words to say what they feel; and they would be ashamed (*blate*, in their own phrase) to use these words if they had them. I have had a touching instance of this within the last few days. Do you remember our taking a walk together one beautiful afternoon to the cottage of one of my people, a poor fellow who was dying of consumption? You sat upon a stile, I recollect, and read a proof, while I went in and sat with him for a few minutes. It seemed to cheer him a little to have a visit from the laird, and I often went to see him. After you left us he sank gradually, — it was just the old story of that hopeless malady,

— till at last, after a few days in bed, he died. I hate all cant and false pretence ; but there was earnest reality in the simple faith which made my humble friend's last hours so calm and hopeful. When he felt himself dying he sent for me, and I went and stayed beside him for several hours. The clergyman's house was some miles off ; and apart from private regard, it was a part of my duty as an elder of the kirk to go and pray as well as I could with the poor fellow. He was only thirty-two, but he had been married eight or nine years, and he had four little children. After lying silent for a while, he said he would like to see them again ; and his wife brought them to his bedside. I know well that no dying father ever felt a more hearty affection for the little things he was leaving behind, or a more sincere desire for their welfare after he had left them. He was not so weak but that he could speak quite distinctly ; and I thought that he would try and say something to them in the way of a parting advice, were it only to bid them be good children, and be kind and obedient to their mother. Yet all he did was just to shake each of the three elder children by the hand, and to say *Gude-day*. As for the youngest, a wee thing of two years old, he said to it, " Will you gie me a bit kiss ? " and the mother lifted up the wondering child to do so. " Say Ta-ta to your feyther," she said. " Ta-ta," said the poor little boy, in a loud, cheerful voice, and then ran out of the cottage to play with some companions.

The story, I feel, is nothing to tell ; but the little scene affected me much. I believe I have told you the exact words that were said ; and then the dying man turned away his face and closed his eyes, and I saw many tears running down his thin cheeks. I knew it was the very abundance of that poor man's heart that choked his utter

424 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

ance, and brought down his last farewell to a common place greeting like that with which he might have parted from a neighbor for a few hours. *Gude-day* was his farewell for ever ! He felt that he had so very much to say, that he did not know where to begin it ; and so his weary heart shrank from the task, and he said almost nothing. I thought how your friend Mr. Tennyson could have interpreted that *Gude-day*. How much of unutterable affection — how much of good advice and fatherly warning — how much of prayer for them to the great Father of the orphans — was implied in poor David's *Gude-day* !

I read a paragraph in *The Times*, a few weeks since, in which it was stated that the late Bishop of London had informed a certain congregation, which had the choice of its clergyman, that he would not upon any account permit a succession of candidates for the living to preach in the parish church. I think the Bishop was right. There is something most degrading to the clerical character, and inconsistent with the nature of preaching, in the practice of persons "holding forth" to a congregation to let the people see how well they can do it, the congregation meanwhile sitting in a critical and judicial capacity. And I lament to tell you that what is a very rare and exceptional thing in England, is a very common thing in Scotland — the practice of *hearing candidates*, as it is termed. You are aware that, at different periods, a great row has been made in this country about the existence of church patronage ; the people always agitating to get the selection of their ministers put in their own hands. In one shape or another, this agitation has been the source of all the secessions from the Scotch Kirk. Ever since the

great secession in 1843, most patrons have been anxious to make popular appointments, for fear of driving the people away from church to some of the multitudinous neighboring conventicles; and instead of directly presenting a clergyman to a vacant benefice, they have in some way consulted the wishes of the parishioners. In the case of the parish in which I reside, and of which I possess the patronage, I did not take this course. I took every pains to find a clergyman who should be a good preacher, a scholar, and a gentleman; and then I presented him without consulting the people in any way. I knew thoroughly that, had I given them their choice, I should simply have been devolving my privilege of appointing a minister upon Smout the baker, Swipes the publican, and Muttonhead the butcher. *They* would, to a certainty, have directed the judgment of the humbler parishioners; and I conceived myself to be a more competent judge of clerical qualifications than these gentlemen. And though the people grumbled a little at first, their good sense and Mr. Smith's faithfulness triumphed in the long run, and he is now extremely popular with all classes. I did not choose to allow Smout, Swipes, and Muttonhead to give me for a parish clergyman some bellying boor, whom I should have been ashamed to ask to meet my friends at my table.

When a patron is more desirous of immediate popularity than I was, he follows one of two courses: he appoints three or four individuals, each of whom he thinks suitable for the cure, and allows the people to select one of these; or he says to the parishioners, "You may nominate three clergymen, and I shall take my choice of these." The former course, which is called "giving a leet," is the more usual, I believe. In either case, a

preaching-match follows, and the people select by comparative trial. In the case of some town churches, where the congregations have the entire matter in their own hands, with no patron to keep them within reasonable limits, forty or fifty candidates have sometimes been heard. Then, by a process of elimination, that number is reduced to two or three; these two or three are asked to preach a second time; and, finally, the election is completed, amid all the degrading circumstances which attend most contested elections. Don't crow over us, my dear Oliver, for I see that you have lately had in London a similar discreditable course of procedure.

Each of the competing candidates of course does his best to make a favorable impression. With congregations of the lower orders the victory lies with him who possesses the strongest lungs and the emptiest head. It is a great stroke in preaching as a candidate to repeat the sermon entirely from memory; a successful claptrap is to shut the Bible with a bang immediately after giving out the text. It very generally happens that the upshot is the division of the parishioners into two violently opposed parties; the educated and respectable people declaring for some preacher of cultivated mind and gentleman-like manner, and the lower classes for some huge, raw-boned, yelling, and perspiring animal, with intense vulgarity in his every tone and gesture, whom they regard as one of themselves. After some weeks of excitement and diplomacy, something like unanimity is generally arrived at; the patron generally holding it *in terrorem* over the people, that if they do not agree within a given time, he will appoint a minister without consulting them. The *hearing-candidate* system has a most degrading effect upon those preachers who seek to get

preferment by it. It tempts directly to every coarse expedient for pulpit effect, and every sneaky means to gain the private good-will of the rabble. Still the system works in practice a shade better than might be anticipated *à priori*; and though sometimes permanent splits result, the minority going off to the Dissenting meeting-house, yet this is far from being the general rule. I need not tell you that no clergyman of any standing would "preach as a candidate" for any living. Candidate preachers are for the most part drawn from the class of newly-fledged licentiates; and from that species of much-perspiring, loud-howling, flabby-faced, and big-jawed preachers, who formed the dunce of the philosophy-classes at college, and who now constitute the parliamentary train of the Kirk.

I have been so little in England of late years, that I do not know whether the institution which I am about to describe is a Scotch peculiarity, or whether it exists on your side of the border: I mean what may be called the *testimonial nuisance*. There is hardly anybody left in this country who has not had a snuff-box, watch and chain, purse of sovereigns, tea-kettle, claret-jug, book-case, gig-whip, saddle and bridle, pony, horse, cow, pig, dog-cart, set of harness, timepiece, Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Scriptures*, load of meal, cart of potatoes, pig's face, German-silver pencil-case, everlasting gold pen, pulpit-gown and cassock, case of mathematical instruments, tea-tray, set of teacups, dozen of teaspoons, dozen of shirts, dozen of pocket handkerchiefs, or dozen of flannel waistcoats, presented to him by a circle of friends and admirers, and the presentation chronicled at great length in the local newspaper. Country gentlemen,

clergymen, railway guards, drivers of stage-coaches, gamekeepers, shepherds, local poetasters, farmers, newspaper reporters, keepers of public-houses, schoolmasters, turnpike-gatekeepers, railway signal-men, stokers of coasting steamers, are among the people most frequently honored in this way. When a testimonial is presented to a man in the humbler walks of life, it is usually followed by a supper, concerning which the *Whistlebinkie Gazette* never fails to record that the arrangements reflected the utmost credit on mine host of the Blue Boar; the evening was spent most harmoniously, Mr. Ronald McCracken favoring the company with his favorite song, "Jenny dang the weaver;" and at a late hour all parties went home, "happy to meet, sorry to part, and happy to meet again." Whenever a new minister comes to any parish, on the day of his induction he is presented with a superb pulpit gown (made by Messrs. Roderick, Doo, and Co., our enterprising fellow-townsmen), and a pulpit Bible and psalm-book (purchased at the establishment of Mr. McLamroch, bookseller, 91, High-street). On going away, he receives a timepiece or silver salver, (furnished, we understand, by Messrs. Waxy and Jollikin, Chronometer-makers, Saltergate); and if a poor man, perhaps a purse of sovereigns (the purse made by the fair fingers of Miss Jemima McCorkle, daughter of the much esteemed surgeon of that name). The handsome gift (we invariably learn) was presented in a few brief but pithy remarks by Mr. James McWilliam, farmer in Cleugh-Lochacher; and the reverend gentleman, who appeared much overcome by his feelings, made an affecting and suitable reply. Occasionally we find it recorded that the tennantry on the estate of Netherwoodie and Clanjamfry proceeded to the Mansion House, and pre-

sented Skipness Alexander Skipness, Esq., their esteemed landlord, with his portrait, drawn in the first style of art by Cosmo Saunders, Esq., R. S. A. They likewise presented an elegant cairngorm brooch to Mrs. Skipness; a whip to Master Sholto Skipness Skipness; and a humming top to Master Reginald Comyne Skipness, the latter gentleman aged one year and eight months. Mr. Skipness, much affected (recipients of testimonials in this country are always much affected), made a suitable reply. He felt his merits were greatly over-estimated. If indeed it were true that he had been the first to introduce into the county an improved breed of pigs, he had his reward in the whisperings of an approving conscience. Turnips had for years occupied much of his attention; nor had cheese passed without many serious thoughts. Onions and carrots, he might say, had rarely been absent from his mind. Still, much remained to be done. There was no limit to the fat which might be carried by the Clanjamfry breed of cattle; and whatever might be the feeling of others, he, for one, would always connect the gimmers and hogs of this district with the future prosperity of the country. The tenantry were then entertained at the hospitable board of Netherwoodie, and left at a late hour, having spent an evening which will long be cherished as a green spot in memory's waste.

Do you remember one morning glancing over the *Whistlebinkie Guardian*, and reckoning up thirty-eight testimonials which had been presented in the preceding week to different individuals in the county? I doubt not that, in your simplicity, you fancied that this district contained an immense number of deserving characters, surrounded by a most generous public. Quite a mistake. Most of the recipients deserved nothing particular: most

#### 430 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

of the subscribers were lugged into giving sorely against their will. Let me explain to you the philosophy of the matter. A, let us say, wants a testimonial for himself. It would not do, however, to endeavor directly to get one up. A therefore goes to B, and proposes to get up a testimonial to C. Now C never did anything remarkable in all his life; and B does not want to give him anything. But it would be a most invidious thing to refuse to subscribe: and so, for fear of giving offence, B, D, E, F, G, and H, severally put down their shilling or their pound, as the case may be: the present is given; the supper or dinner comes off; and the *Gazette* and *Guardian* report the proceedings. In a few months C, who has been made aware who it was that set his own testimonial on foot, feels himself called upon to get up one to A. Then B gets up one to D; D reciprocates; and so on all round. Thus, you see, the balance of property in the district is not disturbed; for each man gets as much as he gives. Neither are people's relative positions and estimations altered; for no man is distinguished above his neighbor. The secret vanity of each individual is gratified: a kindly spirit is maintained in the neighborhood; and in the long run the truth is not prejudiced, for these testimonials come to be valued at pretty nearly what they are worth.

The mention of *testimonials* reminds me of another Scotch peculiarity, about which I may tell you something. All sorts of people in this country are fond of making what they call a collection of *testimonials* or *certificates*, setting forth their qualifications and merits. They apply to any one who may be in a prominent position, whether he knows much of them or not; and receive a sheet of note-paper inscribed with the most out-

rageous and exaggerated compliments. Each person who is asked to give a certificate considers what good qualities the man ought to have in order to be fit for the place he is aiming at, or what good qualities the man would like to be thought to possess; and incontinently sets his signature to a declaration that the man does possess the very highest degree of all these good qualities. A really profligate disregard of truth prevails in Scotland as to this matter. One constantly finds men, even of established reputation, asserting in written testimonials what, if you ask them their real opinion in private, they will confess to you is absurd and untrue. We all understand that in newspaper reports all sermons are eloquent and impressive, all landlords are liberal, all county members are unwearied in their attention to their duties, all professors are learned, all divines are pious, all magistrates are worthy, all military men are gallant, all royal dukes are illustrious. We all understand what such statements are worth; nor does any man but the most verdant care a straw for the critical notices of the *Whistlebinkie Gazette*, which assure us that Mr. Snooks, the local poet, is a much greater man than Mr. Tennyson; and that Mr. Green, our talented young townsman, has already surpassed Turner as a landscape-painter. I don't suppose that you are much elevated when the *Guardian* of our county town declares, at the beginning of a month, that "*Fraser* holds on its way with a ringing and jubilant wildness and manliness of fierceness and terror," — whatever all that may mean, which I confess I don't know. But the Scotch system of exaggerated and (in short) false declarations, made by grave divines and high-spirited gentlemen, as to the qualifications of Smith, Jones, and Robinson, ought to be put down. It deceives

432 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.

and misleads: it is calculated and, I believe, *intended* to deceive and mislead. I feel strongly on the subject, for I take a warm interest in the schools of this parish; and when I first came here, I was most thoroughly taken in by the flaming characters which several teachers brought, who afterwards proved shamefully incompetent. A lad of very deficient intellect and education, and quite devoid of common sense, applying for a teacher's place, comes with a long array of testimonials from clergymen and professors, which, if true, would prove him a prodigy of talent, industry, amiability, and all other virtues under heaven. An extremely bad preacher and wretched scholar, applying for a living (I had no end of such applications when this parish was vacant), brings with him testimonials which tend to show that the human race cannot be expected to produce many such wonders in a single century. The result of all this is, that written testimonials now mostly go for nothing — at least, with people of any experience. They are sometimes even regarded with suspicion. If a teacher in a parish school becomes a candidate for another parish school, and brings with him a very high certificate from the heritors and clergyman of the parish where he is at present, the fear is that they have given him this strong recommendation in order to get rid of him.

A story is told *apropos* of this. A teacher came to the parish of X, bringing an immensely strong certificate from the parish of Y, in which he was at present settled. On the strength of this certificate, the heritors of X elected him to their vacant school. It should be mentioned that the parishes of X and Y are many miles apart. The teacher began his work at X, and speedily proved worth nothing — a lazy, stupid, useless incubus on the parish.

One of the heritors of X met a heritor of Y, and inquired, with some indignation, what on earth the heritors of Y meant by giving such a flaming certificate to an utterly incapable teacher? "Why," said Mr. Y, with great coolness, "We gave that certificate to get you to take him off our hands; and, let me tell you, you people of X will have to give him a far higher character before you will get rid of him!"

I do not vouch for the story's truth: and I believe that good-nature, and unwillingness to give pain by a refusal, are the origin of most of these undeserved panegyrics. When a poor fellow asks you to give a certificate of fitness for some place for which you know he is not fit, but which he has yet set his heart on, it is hard to say no. The temptation is strong to stretch a point in order to say a good word for him; or at any rate to write a few sentences which, without meaning anything, sound as though they meant something in his praise.

And now, my dear fellow, I dare say you are wearied of all this gossip about our Scotch Peculiarities. I have a vast deal more to say, but I think I had better stop for the present. I hope soon to see you here again. It is curious how arbitrarily the memory singles out little incidents and keeps them vividly alive, when worthier things have perished. When I look back upon your late visit to us, I am ashamed to say that the thing which comes out in strongest relief is, not any of your wise and witty sayings, not any of your philosophical reflections, not any of the grand or beautiful scenes on which we looked together. None of these: but I see you yet, with a doubtful expression on your usually serene face, eating a plate of oatmeal porridge, and assuring my wife that you liked it. Well I knew that in your secret soul you

**434 SOME TALK ABOUT SCOTCH PECULIARITIES.**

would rather have read the very dullest article in the  
Balaam-box.

Believe me,

Ever your sincere friend,

C. A. M

Craig-Houlakin,  
November 24th, 1856.



## CONCLUSION.

---

**T**HESE were the kind of thoughts that passed through my mind in the leisure hours of various months in town. The hours, indeed, in which I have been free from the pressure of duty, were short; and they were not many: yet, by regular use, one may turn even these to some account. All kinds of hours, morning and evening, of every day of the week except Saturday and Sunday, have gone to the production of these pages. I have not an evergreen now, though I have planted so many; nor am I the possessor of a single tree of any kind. And when I go and visit the pleasant homes of certain friendly country parsons, I feel my loss; and I sigh a little for the days that are gone. And so these pages have not been thought out amid the sunshiny and breezy places where I wrote certain other pages which possibly you have read. Many of them were thought out by a city fireside; some of them in solitary half-hour walks on quiet winter evenings in a certain broad gas-lit street, remarkable for that absence of passers-by which is characteristic of many of the streets of this beautiful city. But especially I remember many restful hours, happily combining duty with leisure, which are within the reach of every unambitious Scotch clergyman. I mean the hours

which on one day in each month he may spend in attending the Presbytery to which he belongs. The Presbytery, possibly you do not know, is a court of the Scotch Church; consisting of the clergymen of a number of adjoining parishes, with a lay member from each parish besides. This court exercises over a certain district of country the authority which in England is exercised by a Bishop. It is the duty of every member to be present: so that while attending its sittings you have a pleasant sense that you are in the way of your duty. The business of this Ecclesiastical Court is of deep interest to those who feel a deep interest in it. And a weighty responsibility rests with those members of it whose experience and administrative ability are such as entitle them and fit them to lead their brethren. But a good many of the clergy, especially of the younger clergy, have no vocation that way: and the very eloquent and remarkably long speeches which are often made, would be somewhat wearisome if you tried to listen to them. But if you do not try to listen to them, unless at some specially interesting juncture, or when some one is speaking whose words carry special weight, you may have many hours of leisure there; and think of material for various chapters like those you have been reading. I have found my hours at the Presbytery very favorable to contemplation, as well as a delightful rest to body and mind. You are in the path of duty: and yet you feel that your insignificance makes your responsibility quite inappreciable. You do your work, we may hope, as a parish clergyman, diligently and not unsuccessfully. But as an ecclesiastical lawyer and legislator, in all probability, your influence is very properly at zero. You have entire confidence that the affairs of the district are being

managed by wise and good men, who are your seniors in age and your superiors in wisdom. So you may enjoy a day of rest: and of rest happily combined with duty. I have a very great veneration and affection for the Church of England: but I do not think that grand Establishment affords her clergy any season, recurring regularly and not unfrequently, during which they may feel that they are attending to their clerical duty, while yet they are quite free from any sense of responsibility, and from any feeling that they are doing anything whatever.

And so I commend these chapters to the kindly reader hoping that they are not the last.

7  
THE END.



27







